

THE LONDON READER

of Literature, Science, Art, and General Information.

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No. 2056.—VOL. LXXIX.]

FOR THE WEEK ENDING SEPTEMBER 27, 1902.

[PRICE ONE PENNY.]



ARNOLD CLAREMONT FELL TO THE GROUND LIKE A LOG.

THE WIFE'S TRAGEDY

NOVELETTE.

(COMPLETE IN THIS NUMBER.)

CHAPTER I.

THAT ONE, I cannot do it. I have borne too much already!" "But remember, dear, he is your husband, and the world is hard upon women who leave their lords, especially hard upon women of our profession. Then, too, he has neither struck you, nor actively ill-treated you. Hester, be patient!" "Patient!" echoed Hester Garwood, passionately; "and have I not been almost originally so! I have borne harsh words and

unmerited reproaches in silence these six long years. Have I ever, until now, by word or look complained? Have not even you, Ione, occasionally scolded me for submitting to his caprices? Have I not striven to rise for his sake, and worked with and for him, with all my heart and soul. I grudge nothing I have done, nothing I have given; but I claim to be treated as a reasonable creature, a loyal wife. I ask only for consideration and kindness!"

"Do not so excite yourself, Hester," pleaded Ione Melvin, "you will be ill after it; and, dear sister, with all his faults and caprices, I am sure Mortimer loves you dearly."

Hester threw out her hands with a swift, impatient gesture.

"Loves me! then men have a queer way of testifying to their affection. There are times of late, when he is in his good moods, and you

know how good he can be, when he hangs about me with a lover's attention, that I am tempted to cry out 'Hypocrite!' and thrust him away. I am not naturally an evil-tempered woman, but he is changing and warping all my nature. Ah, Ione! be warned by my experience, and do not forge the fetters nothing but death can break!"

"Hester," the younger girl said, in a tone of awe, "surely you have not ceased to love Mortimer?"

"No, I almost wish I had, but he will not let me respect him; and, oh! what is love without esteem?" and with white hands she clasped her whiter brow, whilst all her face was convulsed with anguish.

She leant against the wall, looking down at her sister with wide despairing eyes, and the tears rose to Ione's as she met their gaze. She

put out her hand, and gently touched Hester's.

"My dear, I cannot bear to see you so unhappy. Since we were left alone you have been mother and sister alike to me. There is no one like you, no one; but just in this one thing you are not quite so generous as I have always found you. Perhaps you expect more of Mortimer than he can give."

Hester laughed a short, bitter laugh. What did Ione know of all she endured; of the bitter words which lingered in heart and brain alike long after they were spoken; of the days and days when Mortimer Garwood scarcely exchanged speech to his wife, when to all her gentle ministrations he replied only by sullen silence or sharp monosyllables; when not an act of hers could win a smile or glance of approval; when the dainty dishes she always insisted upon herself preparing for him were sent away untouched, with some disparaging remark. Thinking of these things, the poor wife drew herself erect.

"You don't understand," she said, slowly; "it is the little things that fret. But what is it you wish me to do? If it is in my power, I promise you to do it."

"It is in your power, and I know if you make a vow you will keep it. For your own sake and for Mortimer's, will you try, dear Hester, in the course of the next four weeks, to effect a change in your relationship with your husband? Tell him plainly that unless you are treated more courteously and kindly you cannot live with him longer; and then try—oh! my dear, for your own sake, try to be so gentle with him that even he can neither find nor fancy ground for complaint."

Hester drew her breath sharply. It was hard that she, the faithful, earnest helpmate, should be placed apparently in the wrong; but then Ione was only twenty, and knew nothing of men, for what can any woman understand of their nature until she is married, and the first delight of possession has grown dull? Then she smiled bitterly:

"It shall be as you wish, dear; but after this no entreaties will move me to concession. Now it is time to dress for rehearsal. You will come with me, of course. Oh! how I wish you were not off to town to-morrow. I shall see nothing of you until the close of the season."

"But I shall write you regularly," said Ione, who did not quite realise yet how the written words seem colder than eye or hand; "and it is for my good I go. The change is a grand one."

Hester made no answer. She was busy with her toilet, and perhaps her heart was too full for speech; yet, not for worlds would she permit her friends and acquaintances to guess the bitter truth, the secret grief consuming her. She was nothing if not proud.

They went out together, passing through the shop—Mortimer Garwood was a book-binder—and from thence into the steep streets of Bristol.

Ione Melvin looked bewitching in her pale blue gown and broad-brimmed hat shading her pretty face.

She was what has been called a stained blonde; that is, her complexion was dazzlingly fair, her eyes hazel in some lights, amber in others, and her hair of a deep, pure gold, in the shade coveted by artists, raved of by poets.

She was petite in figure, and light as a bird in her movements. Critics spoke more than favourably of her talent, and just now she had secured a very good engagement in town. Her "forte" was comedy; just the reverse of Hester's, who was fast growing in popularity as a tragedienne.

Hester was twenty-six, tall and slender, with a very wealth of nut-brown hair, a face which, without being in the least pretty, was remarkably attractive, perhaps by reason of the mobile mouth, for that was decidedly beautiful, and the expressive grey eyes.

Years ago, when she was only eighteen, and Ione twelve, her parents had died. They

were middle-class people, who had nothing to leave their children; but they had given Hester a splendid education, and had been wise enough to allow her to choose her own profession.

At eighteen she was playing small parts in provincial theatres, thereby earning the magnificent salary of a pound a week.

But the orphans had, fortunately, simple tastes, and contrived to make two ends meet without much pinching or scraping.

It is true, Hester worked very hard; rehearsing in the morning, teaching Ione throughout the afternoon, mending and making for both, and spending the evening at the theatre, whilst Ione waited for her behind the scenes.

And success crowned the young girl's efforts. She did not burst like a meteor upon the public; still, little by little, step by step, she climbed the ladder to competency. But she was not content; she must have fame too, and slowly, but surely, fame was coming to her.

At twenty she married Mortimer Garwood, but she did not leave the stage. Her earnings were willingly sunk in his business, and with satisfaction she saw it increasing steadily.

She accepted few long engagements, because they would take her from husband and home; and would sacrifice much in the way of salary rather than quit the Bristol boards.

As time went on, and Mortimer was able to engage a foreman, he sometimes accompanied her to distant towns, remaining until her engagement expired.

But these were not Hester's happiest times, for Mortimer, whilst loving her dearly, was a little jealous of her superior talents and the popularity she won. Then he was essentially a home-loving man; still, it was with his consent she continued her profession. Indeed, he was too wise to forbid that, knowing as he did, although he would not acknowledge so much, that Hester's earnings were the chief mainstay of his business.

At times he complained they were not large enough, or that she did not husband them as she should.

He was in such haste to grow rich! He forgot that it is rarely the plodding, hard workers who make fortunes rapidly. And then, too, he was naturally of a melancholy temperament, one who makes "troubles of trifles"; and from these sources sprang all poor Hester's unhappiness.

Month after month, year after year, his dissatisfaction grew; and Hester bore with him patiently, lovingly; never meeting anger with anger, never reminding him of benefits bestowed, and welcoming every better mood of his with smiles and caresses.

But now the limits of her patience had been reached. She had spoken her first bitter words to him, and he had heard them in surprise and rage too deep to permit retort.

It was of these things Hester thought as she wended her way to the theatre, and it was over these she brooded as she retraced her steps. But Ione saw, with pleasure, that as they neared the house the frown left her brow, and she forced her lips to smile.

Mortimer was alone in the shop, and he did not look up as they entered; but the wife, intent upon reconciliation, went to him, and with an arm placed affectionately about his neck, said:

"We are back early to-day, dear. Come and have dinner; then, as a treat, we will go out upon the downs."

"I'm busy!" he answered, sullenly; "my time is not my own as yours is!"

Still she stood, fighting a moment with her anger and pain. Did she not labour early and late? Then she said, ever so gently—

"The walk will be good for us both, and I can help you before I go to the theatre. Will you come?" and stooping, she kissed him.

With impatient hands he thrust her away.

"Don't bother me!" he said. "Won't you ever understand my no means no? And don't wait dinner for me, I can't come for a long while yet!"

Without a word she turned and left him. "Where is the use of struggling any longer?" she questioned of her wrung heart. "He is weary of me; we would be best apart."

She and Ione dined together, but the meal was a farce; and no sooner had each gone to her own room, than Mortimer left the shop and ate his dinner in solitary sulkiness.

On the morrow Ione left for town, and Hester was to all intents and purposes alone. With a wonderful patience she bore all the petty ills that fell to her share, and if her heart ached, she made no sign; so that the workpeople wondered at her tolerance, and said amongst themselves—

"What a shame it was the master so sorely worried her."

She was far from well too; but so long as she could hide this she did, add went about her household and professional duties with a cheerfulness that had something heroic in it.

Mortimer's meals were still as daintily prepared, his books as carefully kept, and not a rehearsal did she neglect; but soon she began to show signs of fatigue when the day's work was over.

Returning from the theatre, she would fall into heavy swoons; she could neither eat nor sleep, and her voice was no more heard singing about the house. But not a word of sympathy did Mortimer utter; in fact, at that time his conduct was characterised by indifference, amounting almost to brutality.

Once when, her self-control failing her, she burst into bitter tears, he asked, coldly—

"What is the matter? Why are you crying?"

"I am wretched beyond measure," she answered, "and I am ill."

"Why don't you see a doctor?" he retorted. "It is your own fault that you continue ill; you will take no advice, but are bent only on having your own way at any cost!"

The reproach was cruelly unjust. She had just then sunk so much money in his business, she felt she could ill afford to spend any upon herself; but she did not say this. There was a momentary flash of anger in her deep grey eyes, then very slowly she breathed rather than said—

"It is not my own way for which I am striving; perhaps I do not care to live."

"You mean you are tired of me?" he asked, sternly.

"No; I do not deserve you should think that. It is you who are weary of the bond that holds us together."

"It is a lie; but you care more for others than for me, you would leave me any day for your sister. You try me and thwart me in every way. Then, too, if you were moderately careful, we should be saving money fast, but you are not."

"I think," she said, icily, "you are forgetting yourself. I have done my best to help you, and do not merit your reproach. If, indeed, you are weary of me, be honest enough to own so much, and let me go. Thank Heaven, I can at least gain a livelihood!"

"Go, if you wish. I might have known how marriage with you would end; but I was a fool, and believed you could be true."

"You shall not say that I am other," Hester cried, in a sudden burst of righteous anger. "You dare not say it."

Mortimer laughed shortly.

"Dare not! You are playing a high hand; please to remember I am your husband, and entitled to respect, and I insist upon receiving it from you!"

She was standing by the door, her head thrown back, a little, he was seated at the table; and as she looked down upon him from her superior point of vantage, she smiled scornfully.

"I would respect you if I could," she said, slowly, and then he swore at her.

Up leapt the hot blood to her cheeks. All the restraint of six long years was forgotten,

all the patience swept aside in the torrent of her anger and outraged love.

"Stop!" she said. "No man has ever sworn in my presence before; I will not endure it!"

"How are you going to help yourself?" he sneered. "You are my wife, consequently my property. I can please myself as to what I say or do in your presence."

"I will not stay to endure insult; I demand to be treated at least with common courtesy. No man would refuse me that!"

"Go away!" he said, toying with the glass of wine which stood beside him. "Go away, or I will throw this at you!"

She lost all reason then; can you wonder? "Do so, if you dare!" she answered, and he, in a gust of passion, tossed the contents of the glass into her face, over her dainty blue gown, with its snowy frills of lace.

With a bound she stood before him.

"Now strike me," she said; "it is foolish to leave such good work incomplete, strike me!" but he thrust her aside, and went out. Her eyes followed him as he went.

Then, with a sigh which was little short of a groan, she turned and walked to her room. She did not cry, her tears and complaints were ended. Quietly and mechanically she drew off her wedding-ring; just as quietly she packed her trunks, wrote a letter, dressed herself, and prepared for her journey—she had then no engagement—and, bidding her maid give her note to her master on his return, turned her back for ever on what had once been to her the happiest spot on earth.

CHAPTER II.

She went to London and to Ione. The latter was sitting in a low chair by the window reading, and started with a surprised cry as she entered.

"Hester! oh, what has happened?"

"The month is up, and I have come to you. I could bear it no longer!"

"Hester! Hester! What will people say?"

"I neither know nor care," dearly. "Why should I? I have done no wrong."

"But the world is so censorious; and then, dear, when Mortimer finds you have really left him, he will be sorry, and will fetch you back again. Indeed, were I you, I would return before folks have time to comment on your absence."

Hester Garwood stood up straight and stern.

"Do you mean, Ione, you do not wish me to share your life any more?"

"How can you be so unjust? I am thinking only of what is best for you."

"I am the fittest judge of that. Experience has taught me many things. So I will stay with you, and we will try to go back to the old life when we were so happy together. You and I, little sister, you and I!" and then she smiled with such infinite pathos that Ione flung herself impulsively upon her breast, and vowed that not fifty Mortimers should be strong enough to tear them apart.

"I shall not go back any more," Hester said. "I cannot trust to his promises of peace, and I was growing desperately wicked. It is best for both that we should live apart."

Ione shook her head.

"Neither is free to form other ties."

"Do you think I would fetter myself again?" Hester asked, heavily; "be yoked once more to an 'icicle or a whim.' I have loved once and for all time. I have trusted and been deceived. All that was best and noblest in me is dead—dead as the roses in that vase beside you!"

"But they still exhale a faint fragrance," Ione said, dreamily, "and there must be some sweetness left in life for you."

With a tragic gesture Hester raised her hands above her head.

"When faith, and love, and hope are dead, what can remain to solace me? Oh! Ione, I started life with such ambitious aspirations,

such dreams of happiness. Now where are the castles I built? What has become of the joy I felt so sure was in my grasp? There, child, do not fret; all the tears in the world cannot wash away my grief or blot out the past. Let us agree to forget the past six years. As Hester Melvin I have always been known; let me be Hester Melvin now, for I am no more a wife!"

"But as Hester Melvin, Mortimer will always have a clue to your whereabouts, and can follow and claim you."

The unhappy woman sighed.

"Never fear, Ione, that he will seek me out. I tell you he is weary of this poor face of mine.

And there are few of your present friends who know my history; to them let me be only your sister. I want to forget the past. I must forget it, or I shall go mad! Ione, next month your engagement terminates; what shall you do then? Do not let us drift apart again. I have money enough to last for several weeks yet, and I am sure to get work."

The young girl's face flushed.

"I would not tell you in my letters because I was afraid it would trouble you; but Mr. Stewart has begged me to go with the company to New York and other places. Lucille Duchesne, our tragedienne, almost refuses to go, and he is awfully worried. Oh! Hester, if only you could get the engagement, what a way out of all your troubles it would be. At all events, Lucille gives her final decision to-morrow morning; and if it is in the negative, who can tell what good luck awaits you? Now, poor dear old lady, let me get you something to eat and drink. I have been shamefully inhospitable."

"I want nothing, thank you, only to rest a little while. Oh, don't look at me like that, I am not going to faint or be ill. I am as strong as I ever was."

But she did not look so as she lay with closed eyes upon the couch, wondering what bitter evil the future held in store for her, and if Mortimer would miss her presence and long for the sound of her voice about the house.

Even now she said to her weary soul, "If he came to me promising amendment, begging pardon for his offences against me, my heart would plead for him against myself."

But Mortimer Garwood had no thought of extending the olive branch; rather he intended to reduce Hester to submission. How dared she put him to open shame! How dared she defy him so flagrantly?

He had been stunned a moment when the maid gave him her message and her letter. He thought she only intended to frighten him; he never believed for an instant that the loving wife of six long years would turn her back upon home and husband, would quietly forswear him for ever.

"It is a fit of heroics!" he muttered, savagely. "I dare say she has gone no farther than Fishponds or Mangotsfield, and will be back to-morrow. She only wishes to frighten me." And then he turned again to her letter.

"Mortimer, for your sake as much as for my own, I am leaving you; we are utterly unsuited to each other, and I will no longer weary you with a presence that has grown hateful to you. I have loved you faithfully, I have worked for you with all the power Heaven has granted me—and oh! my dear, even you cannot accuse me of impatience or neglect of duty!"

"Before Heaven, I have done my poor best to make you happy; and it is my evil destiny that I have not succeeded. I am going to my sister, and you need have no fear that by word or deed I shall disgrace the name you gave me when love was with us and hope was high."

"You will hear of me, perhaps, through the medium of the papers—never in any other way, unless by your own wish you recall me—and when my name drops out of them you will know that I am dead, and you are free to marry some other woman who will give you that happiness I so vainly strove to make your daily portion."

"Good-bye; in my heart there is not, and there never can be, one thought of bitterness against you, and all my prayer is that in the near future Heaven will give you your release from the wretched woman it is now your misfortune to call wife!"

Mortimer Garwood tossed the letter into the fire.

"Let her go," he said, savagely. "I have loved her truly, and she has made a laughing-stock of me. I will not seek her out. Until of her own free will she comes to me and prays my pardon, acknowledging that she sinned against me by her flight, I will never forgive her, or call her wife again."

Day after day he waited for fresh news of her, but she never wrote again. Hester had been a proud woman before love came to her; and now that love had left her, she was sustained by pride alone. Mortimer had not given sign that he needed her; until he said "Come," she would not return to what she felt was certain misery.

She knew nothing of his remorse, which he vainly strove to silence; she could not hear the voice within him crying—

"Hester! Hester! come back to me! Oh, my wife! oh, my darling wife!"

She did not guess until long, long after, how, as he turned uneasily upon his pillow, the bitter tears of manhood coursed down his cheeks—how could she, when he preserved such obstinate silence?

"I will die rather than yield," he said to his wretched heart; "the man should be the master."

And yet, indeed, there were times when he felt he must go to her, kneel at her feet, and pray for that love he knew in his inmost soul he had forfeited. He missed the sound of her light step in the hall, the music of her happy laughter; everything in the household went awry for lack of her skilful hand. The meals were ill-prepared, ill-served; and when he tried, generally vainly, to eat of them, his eyes fell on her empty chair, and then the food all but choked him.

He read the papers daily, and saw no mention of her name in them, although Ione's frequently appeared. Her funds being exhausted, she must return to him, and then—well, then he would be merciful and welcome her back; not too warmly, that would only add to her pride and independence, still with enough of pleasure to make her satisfied with her reception.

And following quickly on this resolution came the news that the Stewart Company had started for America, carrying with them the Sisters Melvin; and then Mortimer Garwood swore a bitter oath that never any more would he give shelter to his wife, or labour in her behalf; and the listening Heavens heard the cruel words. One day he, too, would remember them and wish them unspoken; but that day was far off yet, and his heart was like ice within him.

In due time the company reached New York, and the same ship carried out a young English gentleman named Arnold Claremont. When Hester first joined her sister she had noticed his frequent attendance upon her, and, warned by her own most bitter experience, had prayed Ione not to listen to his protestations of affection. But when was love ever wise?

And so it came about that Ione had smiled upon Arnold's suit, and given him as much encouragement as a modest maiden may; but, slowly, the young man's attentions grew less marked, and little by little he withdrew from Ione's society, devoting himself so much as Hester would allow to her service.

In common with her new friends and companions, he believed her a single woman; and her very indifference added fuel to the fire consuming him, made him more eager to win some sign of approval from her. And poor, pretty little Ione, watching, began to read the truth, and, for the first time in her life, she was angry with her sister. A very fury

jealousy possessed her; only pride forbade her giving any exhibition to her feelings.

"Hester," she said one day, "I think it is not right for you to pose as a single woman; it may lead to unpleasant complications. You are young yet, and not unlovely."

Hester smiled bitterly.

"You are alarming yourself unnecessarily. Where is the man who would look twice at this faded face, these weary eyes of mine? There is no danger, dear."

"But to our friends," persisted Ione, "you might confess the truth."

"I have no friend but you! Rest content, little sister."

"Doesn't it strike you," Ione said, tremulously, "that Mr. Claremont is—to say the least—rather particular in his attentions to you. I am sure he follows you persistently."

Hester's pale face flushed dusky.

"I thought you were the attraction," she answered, heavily. "If not, then please make Mr. Claremont understand he is to visit me no more."

But Ione had not power to deny herself the almost daily sight of the man she loved all too well, and said, quickly:

"That would only aggravate matters. People would talk. I speak to you solely for your own good; and it is only fair you should tell Mr. Claremont you are already a wife."

"If I think it necessary I will," then catching sight of Ione's face, she cried, agitatedly, "Oh! not that, not that, dear child! Never tell me that you love this man whom you suspect to be my lover!"

But Ione thrust her away, exclaiming:

"You are mad, Hester, even to suppose such a thing! Let me alone! Do not kiss me! I am weary of your sentimental moods."

Hester fell back, and looked at her with wild eyes.

"Sister! oh, sister! are you, too, weary of me? Then it is time I were dead!" and she fell lifeless to the floor.

And yet that night she played as she never yet had played. She was the wretched heroine of "East Lynne," and her simulated woes moved even her American audience to tears. Afterwards she said that only her art saved her reason when her troubles were so great.

And slowly, but surely, from that day a barrier arose between the sisters, which was certainly not of Hester's construction, and which Ione passionately declared was not of her raising.

And now the fame the tragedienne had coveted had come to her, but it had lost its charm for her. It was for Mortimer she had toiled to gain it; and now he would have no share in it, and what was fame to one who had lost all joy, or hope of joy?

She was very, very unhappy. The coldness displayed by Ione hurt her beyond all words; and then it seemed to her she had committed an offence against her husband in innocently winning the love of Arnold Claremont, for her eyes being opened by Ione, she saw with what feeling the young man regarded her, and was ashamed.

To a woman as pure as Hester the situation was terrible, and end it in some way she would.

Her chance came sooner than she hoped for. One day the company planned an excursion to a small seaside place, and Arnold, as usual, made one of their number. As usual, too, he endeavoured to attach himself to Hester, but she so skilfully avoided him that he was fair to content himself with Ione's society, and the girl's heart was heavy within her when she marked his air of abstraction, and the way in which his eyes followed Hester's movements.

But she laughed and chatted pleasantly all the while. Not for world should he guess the truth, oh! not for world should her companions know what a poor, blind fool she had been; not even to Hester would she confess

that she loved Arnold Claremont above and beyond everything.

No one else noticed that after luncheon Hester stole away by herself, as now she so often did; no one but Ione saw that Arnold presently went away in the same direction, and upon the most trivial excuse.

She set her teeth hard, and the hazel eyes were dark with pain and anger.

"She is encouraging him," she said to herself, and tried to believe her own false words.

"But to-night he shall know that she is a wife already. I love him! I love him! and I will not lose him to her!"

Mr. Claremont, who had noted well the way Hester had taken, went steadily on; and descending the cliffs, came to the shingly beach, and there amongst the boulders he found Hester.

She looked up as the sound of his steps smote on her ear, and her brow contracted slightly.

"I hoped for solitude," she said, coldly. "My head was aching badly, and I could not bear the laughter and noise above."

CHAPTER III.

He sat down on a boulder, and, as his eyes determinately held hers, said:—

"Do you know how very frigid your reception is, Miss Melvin? One would think you held me in the poorest esteem. I who have striven to make myself your friend. Why are you so cold? What is there in me that compels you so to withdraw into yourself? You are not pleased to see me here, I know; and if you say the word only, I will go."

"You need not go," answered Hester, flushing. "The beach is free to all; I do not wish to monopolise it," and she fingered the leaves of her book in a nervous way.

"What have you been reading?" he asked, glad she allowed him to stay.

"Through One Administration!"

"It's too awfully sad, Miss Melvin. Think of that plucky little Bertha, with all her pretty ways and hidden goodness, being bound for life to such a fellow as Richard Amory. Fiction ought not to be so bad; and, by Jove! it makes me wild to think what that little fragile soul suffered through her husband's weaknesses."

"It is a common case," said Hester, grown suddenly pale. "The unloving wife is usually the best beloved; the woman with no soul beyond her toilet and her pleasures, the most idolised."

"I think you are very unjust to us!"

Hester laughed softly, but there was a world of bitterness and contempt in that soft sound. The blood rose to Claremont's brow.

"I did not suppose you belonged to the shrieking sisterhood," he said, hotly; "that your sole mission on earth is to decry and degrade my sex. I believed you to be purely womanly."

She put out a slender hand and touched him; in obedience to that touch he sat down again—a little sullenly, it is true.

"I want you to hear me out, please. You seem to think I have developed into a 'strong-minded female.' I wish I had, for then, perhaps, I should be spared much pain. You think I speak without experience. I do not. My lines have not fallen in pleasant places for long years. I have not met with so much love and faith that I should trust each and all without question."

"You mean," he said, heavily, "some fellow has been false to you!"

"No, not that; there is only one man I loved, and he made me his wife."

"What!" he almost shouted, and his face went white. Then after a moment—"you poor girl—he died!"

"No; he still lives, and I am still his wife; but there were reasons why we should part, and so I left him."

"The fault was not yours!" he cried, impulsively, "he alone was to blame! Not an

angel from heaven should convince me that you are other than the woman that I reverence and love."

It had come, as she knew it must, this confession of his passion; and yet it startled her, and her face was very white as she rose and confronted him.

"By the dignity of wifehood, which still fences me round, I pray you say no more of love. Think what you will of me, I have grown to value common opinion at its true worth. I only want to keep my name clean and unspotted. It is"—this with a half-choked sob—"my only goodly possession now."

He went to her side, and forcibly took her hands in his.

"You will not cry out against him, you will not publish your wrongs; but I know that in some dreadful way he ill-treated you, and put you to scorn. Why do you hug your fetters? I am rich. Let me help you to break them, to give you that freedom you must crave, and which alone will enable you to accept the love I offer."

"My wrongs admit of no redress," she said, coldly. "My husband was never false to me, and with all my heart I love him still. Let go my hands; how dare you hold me? If by my silence I have wronged you I ask your forgiveness, and I beg you to forget me, and keep my most unhappy secret. A woman who has left her husband is not often regarded charitably."

"Why will you cling to him?" passionately. "You are blind to your own happiness. Tell me, what was his sin against you?"

"I will tell you nothing," proudly. "Your proffered help is an insult to me, because you have confessed yourself my lover. Mr. Claremont, if death should free me to-morrow, and only death could do that, I would not trust the remainder of my life to any man's keeping; because I never could love again, and I have no faith in any living creature."

"You protest too much," he said, angrily; "but I swear, if you were free, I could make you my wife in less than six months. Hester, be reasonable; tell me how I am to free you, in what way I may win you. It is your happiness I seek."

She looked fully at him.

"He said so once, and I know now the value of man's oath," and she laughed. "I know now in what light men regard their wives; and were I free I should still decline the honour you offer me. For the rest, say no more on the subject. I ought not, and I will not, listen to you; and now, please leave me."

"You have treated me unfairly all the way along," he said, angrily. "You should have told me the truth before. You must have guessed my feelings for you. Why did I come out here if not to be near you? Why have I followed you from place to place giving no thought to any other woman, seeing and hearing only you? I tell you, if you are lost to me I don't care what may happen. You make up my existence. Why have you treated me so mercilessly? Why must I suffer for another man's sin?"

"I did not guess," Hester said, gravely, "that you cared for me until—until others warned me; and, from that day, Heaven knows I have tried to avoid you. I have confessed my sorrow. I would remedy my fault if I could. Perhaps in a little while you will forgive me, because men so easily forget; and in the meanwhile I pray you to go your way and let me go mine. We are best apart!"

"We are best apart!" he echoed. "I think I could kill you now for the anguish you have given me to bear!"

And then he rushed wildly up the cliffs, and as he was lost to her sight Hester sank moaning upon the beach. Life was too cruel to bear. Oh, that she could die!

Through the homeward journey, Arnold devoted himself to Ione, until the girl's face beamed with a new delight, and her beauty

took a tender shade, her deep eyes grew instinct with a joy that, alas! was groundless. "To-morrow, after rehearsal, I want to see you," he said, at parting; "can you manage to give me a quiet half-hour? Will you be so kind, Miss Ione?"

The colour came into her cheeks.

"You may meet me at the stage entrance," she answered. "Hester does not go to rehearsal to-morrow. She is off for the night. We play 'She Stoops to Conquer,' and my sister is not cast for the piece."

"You may expect me, and I don't know how to thank you," and then he raised the little hand with a courtly gesture to his lips, and that night, at least, Ione went to bed happy.

She dreamt of a happy ending to her love story, of a reconciliation between Mortimer and Hester; and when she woke rather late in the morning, so full was she of her joy that she voluntarily kissed the pale sister who had been as a mother to her since her mother died.

Hester flushed, the beautiful mouth quivered, and the grey eyes filled with tears.

"Ione," she whispered, "Ione, little sister, we are going to be happy again together. The cloud between us has passed."

"Oh, yes," laughed Ione, "it has quite passed. We have been like a couple of naughty children, I don't know why; but for the future we will be upon our best behaviour. Oh! Hester, there is no need to strangle me. Why, I declare, you are crying!"

"Only for very joy, dear; I thought you had begun to hate me!"

"You stupid old creature! I wonder you aren't ashamed of yourself for airing such notions. Now, help me to dress, like the darling you are, or I shall be late at rehearsal, and old Stewart will storm. You know how autocratic he can be, and is."

So Hester plaited the lovely hair into innumerable braids, arranged and rearranged the tiny curls about the white brow; and, having made her young sister as lovely as she could, saw her depart with a smile on her lips, and great unshed tears in her eyes.

Oh, Heaven! grant that Ione's life might be happier than her own had been, for Ione was not strong to suffer.

All through that rehearsal Ione's heart beat only to one word, and that word was Arnold. He had begged her to see him alone, and what could such an entreaty mean but that he loved her, and she, after all, had been mistaken with regard to his feeling for Hester.

At the stage-door he met her.

"I have a dog-cart waiting," he said. "I thought we might talk more pleasantly and profitably if we were quite alone. I am going to take you out to a place I know. I am not a stranger to America; all my boyhood was spent here; my mother was an American," and as he talked her was assisting her into her seat.

She looked so bright and pretty that a man might well lose his heart to her, and yet Arnold Claremont in that hour felt not the least little throb of love for her. It was of Hester he was thinking—Hester, who would have none of him, who belonged already to a luckier man than he.

And when they were well upon their way he began to speak of her, until, with a passionate throb of jealousy, Ione realised why he had begged her to share this jaunt, and all the old jealousy of Hester was revived in two-fold force.

"And so you want to know her story," she said, in a low voice. "Why did you not ask it of her?"

"I did, but she would not go beyond the slightest hints."

"I scarcely wonder," said Ione, "the story does not redound to her credit. Understand, Mr. Claremont, Hester is all that is good and pure; but she is not quite womanly enough, and she expected too much of the man she married. She wanted to have a lover all her life. She would not submit to a husband's caprices, and so they parted; and I do not

think Mortimer was wholly to blame. Hester is too exigente!"

This after Hester's long toil for her. Oh, it was cruel!

"Miss Melvin, pardon, I do not know by what other name I should address your sister, never struck me as being a difficult woman to live with!" Arnold said, coldly.

"She lives on the heights!" said Ione, in a gentler tone than she had previously used; "most folks are content with the levels!"

"But," he argued, "is there no redress for her? Surely her husband must be a brute below pity or pardon! What is to be done, Miss Melvin?"

She flashed on him then,—

"You love her!" she said, all the notes of her sweet voice jarred and out of tune, "and so you least of any must be her advocate. Mr. Claremont, there were faults on both sides, and between man and wife no one has a right to interfere, least of all you!"

"I love her!" he answered, "and her happiness is my desire!"

Ione stretched out her hand to him,—

"If you love her, leave her! She has only her good name for her fortune!"

"That I shall not take from her; but loving her, I must serve her!"

"In what way? Surely where I failed you cannot succeed, and your interference would probably anger Mortimer Garwood the more against her!" said Ione, and her heart was black with jealousy. "What is it you propose to do?"

"I have thought of nothing yet; but you know, as well as I, there is only one way of release for her, and that is through the divorce court!"

"Fortunately," said Ione, "the marriage vows are more binding in England than America; and neither Mortimer nor his wife have sinned against each other in the sense you mean. Nothing but death can release Hester. And, Mr. Claremont, as a man you should strive with your passion; as a gentleman, you should leave Mrs. Garwood unmolested."

His face was very gloomy.

"You seem to have a very poor opinion of me, Miss Melvin; you also seem to think that a man can trample out his love at his own will and pleasure. I wish I could act upon your very comfortable belief; and, for the rest, I shall not harm your sister by word or deed; you need have no fear."

Her eyes were full of tears as she lifted them to his.

"You, like Hester, are bent upon misunderstanding me! I speak only for her good and yours," and then she hid her face and wept a little, and the man's heart melted towards her—she was so pretty, so affectionate, so anxious to serve Hester—and laying his hand upon hers, he said, gently—

"Don't cry, dear, I spoke like a brute; but upon my word I did not mean it. Next to Hester, there is no woman on earth I esteem so highly as you. Let us be friends again?"

She feebly smiled as she looked into his handsome worn face, and all her heart cried out for his love; she scarcely could refrain from telling all the wretched truth. With a visible effort she recovered her lost control.

"Of course we are friends, and I hope shall always remain so," she said. "It should take more than a few hasty words to change our mutual regard"; but she was very silent through the remainder of the drive, and on their return, bidding him a hasty good-bye, she went up to her own room, there to sob as though her very heart would break.

"She has everything good and glad," she murmured, resentfully, "she might at least have left me his heart. Did she grudge it so sorely she needs must steal it away and leave me desolate? I wish I were dead!—or she!"

A light step outside, a hand upon the door, and then Hester entered, looking very pale and weary.

"Aren't you well, dear?" she asked, bending over the girl caressingly, "or has anything gone awry to-day?"

"Everything is out of gear," Ione retorted, sitting up and flaring an angry glance at Hester, "and all the mischief is of your working. You have stolen my lover from me, and wrecked all my life, and you care less than nothing! Women like you have no heart and no pity. I do not wonder Mortimer found it so hard to live with you!"

"Say no more!" Hester answered, brokenly; "leave me at least the belief that I did not wrong him when I came away—that thought has been my support throughout. And, little sister, try sometimes to remember the old love that used to exist between us, that still lives here in my poor, bleeding heart, and be merciful to me!" And then, with a gesture of infinite sorrow and despair, she turned and left her.

CHAPTER IV.

A year had passed since Hester left her home, and in that year things had gone ill with Mortimer. Extravagant servants had wasted his substance; his home, of which he used to be so proud, had a slipshod air; his books were in utter confusion, and often he was compelled to refuse work for lack of funds to execute it, for his only capital had been his clever, industrious hands, until Hester flung her earnings generously into the business.

Soon he was compelled to discharge his foreman; then one hand after another received dismissal, and folks began to talk.

The shop had a deserted air, his tradesmen grew troublesome and unkind, and no one was astonished when Mortimer Garwood was proclaimed bankrupt.

He passed his examination honourably; but his proud heart was crushed, and all the energy seemed gone from his life.

Never again could he hold up his head in the place where all men knew him. He must go away, and then, perhaps, in fresh scenes, he would forget all the sorrows and mistakes of his life; perhaps he should even forget her for whom his soul was hungry. So he went to London. She was there, he knew, and it might chance that he should see her.

"I have been a fool, and mad!" he thought, bitterly. "I never was worthy of her, I never should have bound her to me; but, as Heaven is above me, I loved her! (Now I would crawl to her feet and kiss the hem of her garment if only she would not spurn me. But how can I go to her now, bankrupt and beggared? Would she not think I sought her help, that I intended to live upon her bounty? No; I will retrieve my lost position, and then I will go to her, humbly and prayerfully, and, being generous, she will forgive."

So he set to work to find employment, and, being skilful, he quickly obtained it; but he did not live like a man in comfortable circumstances. Every penny he could hoard he hoarded. It was for her. It brought the day of their reunion nearer and nearer yet; and he looked on the little heap of coins with glistening eyes.

He wondered that Hester and Ione were playing at different houses. Soon he learned that they lived apart, and he wondered the more.

He guessed nothing, knew nothing of the breach between the sisters; of Ione's ingratitude and Hester's grief; of the scene between the two women when Ione had fiercely upbraided Hester, when she had spoken words which, though they might be forgiven, could never be forgotten.

Then each went her separate way, but Ione kept herself acquainted with all her sister's movements, and knew how, day by day, Arnold haunted her steps, and said, contemptuously, to herself:

"She is growing old and faded; he will weary of her soon."

And then she looked at her own fresh love-

liness, and wondered over his blindness, and prayed wildly that in time his heart would turn to her.

One night she was not to appear at the theatre, and, pleased with her unwonted freedom, she went with some friends to the Corinthian, where Hester was playing.

She had no particular wish to see the performance, which was "The Lady of Lyons," but she wanted to assure herself that Arnold Claremont was not of the audience.

Her eyes, bright with anxiety, wandered from stall to stall, from boxes to pit; and then she gave a great start, and almost cried out in her astonishment, for there before her was Mortimer, his gaze bent upon the stage where Hester stood!

He was worn and aged, but she would have known him anywhere; the pallid, dark face, and the big, brown eyes were not to be mistaken.

Never for a moment did her gaze wander from him, and slowly an idea grew in her mind, slowly she formed the resolve to acquaint him with Arnold's story. He was always jealous, he had never forfeited his right of control over Hester, and she (Ione) felt, if he knew all the truth, he would quickly assert his authority.

"And when she is safely in her own home again," she said to herself, "I shall have power to win my lover back to my side."

With ill-concealed impatience she waited for the end of the play, and then rising, she begged her friends to excuse her, saying she had seen a friend of her childhood amongst the audience, and wished to exchange speech with him.

Drawing hood and cloak around her, she hurried to the pit entrance, and presently Mortimer drew near, and then passed her. She followed him quickly, and once in the open street, gained upon him, laid her hand upon his arm, and whispered:

"Mortimer, it is I—Ione—and I want to speak with you."

She did not understand his shamed and crestfallen look, and went on hurriedly:

"We were always friends, Mortimer, and I want you to remember I do not consider Hester altogether blameless in the past. I saw you almost as soon as the play began, and determined to speak to you. There is so much I have to tell. But first give me your arm, and let me hear what brings you to London?"

Mechanically, he suffered her to lean upon him. He had not yet recovered the start her appearance had given him, and speech was difficult to him then. So Ione said:

"You must not visit Hester's faults upon me; I want to help you both if I can. How worn and ill you are!"

"There is reason why I should be," he answered, wearily. "I have gone through endless troubles since she went away!"

"Poor old Mortimer! Now, be a good, sensible boy, and for once forget your pride. Go to Hester and compel her to return home with you; it would be best for her and for you. You know how cruelly the world judges women who have left their lords, and I want to see you happy together once more."

"Then you don't know what has chanced to me?" he questioned. If you did, you would hardly advise me to break in upon her new life. I am a bankrupt in all good things. I have no home to which I could take her, everything has failed with me; and now, though Heaven sees I love her more than ever, I did in the past, I cannot go to her as a suppliant. I must retrieve something of my old position—I work early and late to do that—and the only hope that sustains me is that in some not far-distant day I may plead my cause and win her forgiveness."

"Ione, you can never guess all that I have endured—all the long weeks of yearning—all the anguish of self-reproach, the miserable consciousness that I, and I alone, had brought about my own ruin and misery, and given her so bitter a cup to drink. When I lost all, I came to town, because I knew she was here,

and it is still a joy, if a cruel one, sometimes to see her without being seen. To hear the notes of her dear voice, and think that there will yet be a time when it will sound in our own home again for me. I don't deserve it—but, oh, Heaven, how I desire it," he cried, with a tragic gesture, and Ione listened impatiently to him; but when he had ended, she said, gently,—

"You poor thing! how you have suffered! Why did you not write to me? I would have gladly helped you. And if only you will be a little reasonable Hester will rejoice to give you a fresh start. She is generous, and, for all her pride and silence, she loves you yet. But a new danger threatens you. There is another man who values her even as you do—who would make her his wife to-morrow, if the law allowed and she would consent."

He started violently and a look of fierce jealousy darkened his face.

"Who is he?" he asked; "how dare he raise his eyes to my wife—my wife, I say!"

"Hush, we are in the street, and you must not excite yourself unnecessarily. You will believe me when I say that Hester cares as little for him as for the Sultan of Turkey; and he loved her before ever he knew she was a married woman, and now he cannot easily conquer his infatuation, but follows her from place to place, and I want you to end this. You know how ready the world is to condemn the innocent, and neither you nor I wish her name to be tossed lightly hither and thither. You must use your authority to save her."

"What authority have I?" he questioned, wearily. "Do you suppose she would listen to me now? And if she left the boards, what have I to offer her in exchange? Oh, Hester! Hester! I love you, but I have lost you—my wife! my wife!"

"Not lost her! Oh, do listen to me and control yourself. Is she to drift with the current, and be gulped at last?"

"What is his name?" Mortimer demanded. "This man who presumes to love her—who is he?"

"You will do nothing rashly?" Ione questioned, just a little afraid of the storm she was raising. "Promise me so much?"

"I promise!"

"He is Arnold Claremont, a gentleman by birth and fortune. If you would see him, go almost any night to the Corinthian. He will sit in the box nearest the stage, and he will have no interest in the play apart from Hester. You cannot mistake him. He is tall, broad-shouldered and fair. At the close of the performance he will hurry to the stage-entrance and wait for Hester's coming."

Mortimer drew his breath sharply.

"And she!" he gasped.

"She will fling him a careless word, perhaps, and with a scornful look pass on. Hester does not forget she is your wife."

"To-morrow I will be there; but, Ione, I do not wish her to hear of me. You in your turn must promise to say nothing of this interview. I would die rather than return a pauper to her; only I shall know how to protect what is still my own."

"And you will do nothing to harm Mr. Claremont?"

"Not if he proves honourable. Now let me take you home. Where are you living?"

"Oh," evasively, "too far from here for me to trouble you; if you will only call a cab, I will drive there. I am really very tired, and have a hard day's work before me."

"I want you to feel, Ione, how very grateful I am to you for your interest in me. It has done me good to see and speak with you, and for your sake I will try to act with prudence. You are not living with her?"

"No, we quarrelled, and I felt it best to part, so that we might remain friends. Then, too, the Corinthian and the Clytie are far apart, and it is more convenient for me to live near to my work. Good-bye, Mortimer; keep a good heart, and all will come right!"

Then she stepped into the cab he called, and was driven away, neither giving her address nor asking his; and in a maze of thought, he walked towards the one poor room he called home.

He was filled with mad jealousy; but it said nothing for the man's love and faith, that never for a moment did he think Hester had encouraged her lover or swerved from her loyalty to himself.

"Heaven bless her!" he said to his dull heart. "Heaven bless her, and make me worthier her!"

The next night he brushed his shabby clothes, and took especial pains with his simple toilet. Then he went in the direction of the Corinthian. He had eaten but sparingly all day, because of to-night's expense, and it seemed to him he was even then robbing Hester of her due when he abstracted the necessary money from his pitifully small hoard.

He did not choose a prominent seat, it was no part of his scheme to discover himself; but he was careful to select a good place for espionage. And when the play began he lifted his heavy eyes to the box Ione had spoken of, and there saw a fair-haired giant he felt instinctively was his rival. Even to his jealous heart he acknowledged that Hester would have made a happier choice, had she been free, had she elected him for her husband.

The fair, handsome patrician face, the noble presence, might well appeal to woman's heart. With a sick sense of inferiority he watched Arnold through all the play; noted the eager light in his blue eyes when Hester appeared, the flush of pride when the audience applauded her, and wished in his heart he had left her free to marry a man worthier her than he could ever be.

In the midst of a storm of applause the curtain was rung down; but Hester must appear again and yet again. Bouquets were showered before her, amongst them Arnold's was the loveliest; but she allowed it to lie disregarded at her feet, she never once glanced towards the donor, and Mortimer's heart throbbled with passionate exaltation. She still cared for him, this delicate lovesome woman with the grave sweet face and tragic eyes. Oh, yes! Heaven be thanked, she cared for him yet; and with Heaven's help he would one day deserve the treasure of her love.

When all was ended, when he could no longer feast his hungry eyes upon her tender beauty for to him she was beautiful he went hastily round to the stage entrance. Arnold was already there; and Mortimer, standing far back in the shadows, waited for his wife's coming.

He knew the slight form as soon as it issued from the door, and caught his breath. How could he let her pass without one word?

Arnold had already advanced—in his anger Mortimer felt he could murder him—and as Hester drew near he accosted her.

"Miss Melvin, stay just one moment. I must speak to you!"

"You must choose a more fitting time, Mr. Claremont," she answered; "and if you would understand how little I desire any intercourse with you I should be infinitely obliged."

"I will be heard," said Arnold, passionately, and Mortimer longed to strike him down.

"You shall not always ignore me thus."

"Let me pass," answered Hester, and swept by him to the carriage waiting for her.

She little guessed that as she went, her husband's hands touched her cloak softly, that his eyes followed her in blessing, that his voice breathed her name in accents of passion and despair. And when she had gone, he stepped from his hiding-place, and, striking Arnold smartly upon the shoulder, said, harshly—

"You and I have a heavy reckoning; if you are a man, you will answer to me to-night for your conduct."

CHAPTER V.

Arnold turned sharply.

"What the deuce do you mean?" he asked, with quick passion. "Who and what are you?" Then, as his eyes wandered over the poor, shabby garments, an expression of contempt came into them. "You are trying to blackmail me," he said, "but, my good fellow, you have come to the wrong quarter for success. I give you two seconds in which to effect your escape; if you make any delay, I shall have you arrested."

Mortimer Garwood laughed bitterly.

"You judge a man by his clothing," he said; "you are not the only fool in that respect. I want nothing of you—I would starve rather than take alms of you; but I do insist that from to-night you shall leave Miss Melvin unmolested!"

"What have you to do with her? How dare you take her name upon your lips? Out of my way, fellow!" and he made as if to pass, but Mortimer stood before him, barring his way, and in his mien there was a certain dignity which impressed Arnold against his will.

"I have the greatest right on earth to protect her against such men as you," he said, quietly. "She is my wife."

"Your wife! Then you are the contemptible wretch who made her life a very purgatory? What are you doing here? By Heaven, if you give her fresh cause for sorrow, I will kill you as I would kill a rat. What could she see in you that she should love you to her own destruction? Go your own way, and leave her free to go hers."

"She is my wife," Mortimer said again, "nothing can alter that fact; and I know she loves me still, unworthy as I am! I ask nothing of her; I shall not even make known my existence to her until I can give her a comfortable home; but I will not tamely submit to your attentions to her—they are repulsive to her, and an insult. For a less offence than yours men have been stricken down—and to-night there is murder in my heart."

Arnold smiled.

"Loud talkers are never great doers. If you want to punish me for my 'insolence' in addressing your ill-treated wife, do so. Let us stand face to face, each accepting the consequence of our meeting without complaint. I know of a nice quiet little spot, not fifty miles from here, where we can fight it out unmolested. I treat you as I would treat a man of honour"—Mortimer winced at that—"and propose we should dispense with seconds. At any cost her name must not be dragged into publicity, and the one who survives must never divulge the secret to her. Come to my chambers and choose your weapon; then to-morrow you must go down to Hedworth—it is a village in Essex; there I will meet you and show you the spot most suitable for our encounter. The following morning we meet before the world is astir, and the one who falls must take his chance—the other is to take refuge in flight. Do you agree to my terms?"

"Yes; let us now go to your rooms." Side by side they walked through the half-deserted streets, speaking no word; and, arriving at his chambers, Arnold Claremont led the way into them. As Mortimer's weary eyes took in every sign of luxury he sighed heavily. How much Claremont had to give Hester! How little he could offer her! With a passionate gesture he said—

"I hope I may be the one to fail; you will make her happier than I have done. Heaven forgive my brutality. Now, let me see the weapons. To think a little thing like this should carry certain death with it," as he took up a small, beautifully mounted revolver and examined it. "Well, this is my choice—do you use its fellow?"

"Yes," briefly. Then after a pause, "Have you money enough to carry you down to Hedworth?"

"Yes. If not, I would tramp there. I am not a beggar. To-morrow evening you will

find me waiting you at the station. This is a matter that admits of no delay and no compromise," and without another word he went downstairs, and into the lovely night.

Sleep would not come to him for all his wooing; and as he tossed to and fro his mind was full of Hester. Suppose he should fall—he was no marksman; suppose he should die, and that without one word or smile of forgiveness from her!

Was she always to remember him as a cruel tyrant, and, sheltered by Claremont's care, grow in time to loathe his memory?

He flung out his arms upon the table, and, burying his face upon them, broke into the hoarse and terrible sobs of manhood.

He was not worthy she should come to him, he had treated her with uniform unkindness even when most he loved her; and yet, oh! yet, if she would but come to him now, she might reproach, revile him as she would, and never an angry word would he utter in reply; because now he knew himself in all his littleness, and was ashamed through all his being. How could he die and leave her no sign?

And then suddenly he rose, and, drawing out pen and paper from a tiny recess, wrote rapidly awhile.

He addressed his letter to her, adding a note to the effect that if he did not return from his journey his landlord was to forward it to Miss Melvin at the Corinthian.

Then he lay down and tried again to sleep; but at dawn he rose heavy-eyed and unrefreshed, and began his few preparations, which were of the simplest nature.

Then he went to his work, not staying all day for food or drink, and at five he left and travelled down to Hedworth, noting with a sigh of regret how much he was reducing his little hoard.

Claremont travelled by the same train, only he went first-class; and neither knew the other was near until Hedworth was reached.

"So you have come," said Arnold. "Where do you lodge?"

"I don't know yet; I've to look about me first. At what time do we meet to-morrow, and where?"

"It will be light enough at two. I am going to the White Hart, the principal inn here. You might get lodgings at the Dragon; it is quiet, cheap, and respectable. And as we don't wish to be seen together, you had better follow me at a distance to the spot I have selected. If you do not approve it, you can say so."

The blood was red in Mortimer's cheeks as he fell back, and a great rage filled his heart; but he was learning now to control himself, and gave no sign of his pain and pride.

They went quickly down a broad strip of road; then Arnold opened a gate, and they passed up a lane overhung by magnificent oaks; then through another gate across a wide park, and so to a lonely spot skirting a wood.

"This is the place," said Arnold. "A good many folks pass here as the day gets up, but so early in the morning we shall not be disturbed, and we are too far from the village to be detected. Are you satisfied?"

"Perfectly. If I should die, you will by some means let her know her freedom. I should like to think of her with my last thoughts as being happy once again, just as she used to be."

"I will let her know. I suppose you can find the way here?"

"Yes, I shall not miss my appointment, grimly. "I wish it had not come to this; but I can see no other remedy for your ill, and with all my heart I hate you that you have striven to win my wife from me and to dishonour her. Man, was there no other woman who could please you?—Must you work to alienate her—"

"We will not talk of such things now," answered Arnold, coldly. "We have said all that is necessary; and now I will leave you,

trusting to your promise. If you fail me, I shall know what to think."

"I shall not fail you," grimly. "I hate you too much for that!" And then, with gloom, eyes he watched the other walking towards the park.

That night he slept at the humble Dragon, where the accommodation was of the most primitive kind; and his rival fared well at the White Hart, and half unconsciously prayed that he might be the victor in the coming fray, so that at last Hester might be his; for he never doubted his power to win her if once Mortimer was lost to her by death.

Strangely enough, he slept well that night, waking just as the first grey streak of dawn entered the room.

Then he rose, and, dressing himself hurriedly, looked to his revolver, crept downstairs like a thief, and stepped out of the parlour window on to the stones below, and, as swiftly and noiselessly as he could, made his way to the rendezvous. Mortimer, haggard and pale, was waiting him.

"You are punctual," he said. "Now measure out the distance, and let the play begin. You are a gentleman and understand these things. I am a poor workman, with no knowledge but of my own craft."

"If you repent your bargain, say so," answered Arnold, coldly.

"I do not repent; and courage is not confined to your own class, Mr. Claremont. Please lose no time with your preparations."

Arnold said no more; but, having measured the distance, he bade his opponent look to his revolver, and then the foolish contest began.

The first shots flew harmlessly by, but at the second Mortimer gave a loud cry, for Arnold Claremont fell to the ground like a log.

Mortimer hastened to him, laid his trembling hand upon the almost pulseless heart. Then he turned and fled like a mad thing from the scene of slaughter.

He caught the first train to town. He dared stay no longer in that dreadful place. If Claremont were dead! If Hester should learn the truth! Oh, was there not some place on earth where he could hide himself?

What had he done? What had he done? Would not everyone who looked upon him know him for what he was? And that awful motionless figure, lying so prostrate beneath the deepening blue of the sky. Would he not see it always—always in the noonday glare—"in the dead, unhappy night!"

What peace was there for him? How could he plead with blood-stained hands for Hester's love and companionship?

He could never tell how he got through that awful journey, how he lived through the anguish of that terrible day; but at last he reached his dreary lodging, and, throwing himself upon his bed, fell into a deep and dreadful swoon, from which he did not wake for very long.

No one came near him; in the world he stood alone; there was no one to say a comforting word to him, and in his weakness and despair he shed many a bitter tear.

Then he rose and tried to prepare some semblance of a meal; but he could not eat; the thought of that silent, awful form made him turn sick and loathing from the scarcely appetising food.

But with the new day came new strength, and, dressing with care, he made his way to his place of employment.

The master met him coldly. He had absented himself a whole day without leave. He wished to employ only steady and tried workmen; trade was slack, too, and he might consider himself dismissed.

He went out into the streets like one in a dream. What was he to do? Was not Hester lost to him for ever? He bought a paper of a ragged newsboy, and searched anxiously down the columns until he came to the following paragraph:—

"Yesterday morning the body of a gentleman was found on the confines of Hedworth

Woods. On examination it was discovered he had been wounded by some miscreant just below the heart. From papers found upon him it is ascertained he is Mr. Arnold Claremont, of Claremont, Warwickshire. He is at present lying at the White Hart Inn, Hedworth, but little hope is entertained of his recovery. No arrests have been made.

He was not dead, then. Whilst there was life there was hope! Oh, Heaven in its mercy grant Claremont might live! If he died! What then was he—Mortimer?

All day he wandered about the streets seeking employment and finding none. In an aimless way he drifted to Victoria Station, and there he saw Ione, white and frightened-looking.

Their eyes met, and she came towards him with the swiftness of a bird.

"I have read it in all the papers," she gasped, "and I know that you did it. If he dies, I shall denounce you. I am going to him now. He has no friends, and there is only me to love him!"

Then she stepped into a carriage, and was whisked from his sight; but until she could see him no longer, she bent her white, wrathful face and angry eyes upon him.

He turned away sick at heart, and once more began his search for work, though, indeed, he hardly cared now whether or no he obtained it.

There was no good left for him in life, and the river lay before him, shining like silver beneath the summer moon. At any time he could find rest there. Rest! ah, that was all he craved, except the touch of his wife's pure lips to his.

Day after day the weary search for work went on. Day after day his little hoard wasted, and hope grew faint within his breast. Of Claremont he had no news. To Hester in her prosperity he could not go; although in his heart he knew she would gladly give him of her substance, would look on him with pitying eyes, and blame herself for all the evil that had come to him.

"But," he said, "I will die rather than link her life to mine. If he is dead, her whole life would be shadowed by my crime if once I made known my existence to her. Heaven bless her, and let no sin of mine make her life heavier to bear!"

Soon there began the grim fight with poverty. There came a day when he drew out the last shilling from its hiding-place. He had lived frugally enough, but his little store was exhausted now, and before him there loomed only the river or the workhouse. He preferred the former, and yet—yet he would like to think at the last she had stood beside him, had kissed his clay old lips and unconscious face, had hung about him with loving observations. With such thoughts he climbed to his wretched room, and there fell prone upon the floor, knowing nothing, hearing nothing, lapped for the while in blessed unconsciousness.

CHAPTER VI.

It was days before Arnold Claremont recovered consciousness. He had been found lying where he had fallen and was conveyed to the inn, and thither Ione went, feeling thankful that at present she had no engagement.

She wrote no word of her movements to Hester—it was Hester's husband who had all but murdered the man she loved, and her heart was bitter against them both. The comfortable landlady looked up in surprise as the extremely pretty and stylishly dressed young lady entered the sanded bar-parlour.

"I have come to nurse Mr. Claremont," said Ione as quietly as she could. She was trembling in every limb, and her face was white.

"Law sakes! and glad I am you've come," said Mrs. Boram. "What with the house to see after, the men to serve, and all that I shan't got time to attend to him properly, and

I don't trust that Ann Wyatt no farther than I can see her. She's with him now, but she don't know no more about nursing than this here broomstick. Poor gentleman, he's awful bad. I hope he won't die here, it 'ud make it so bad for business. Folks don't care to come to a house what's got a corpse in it!"

"May I go to him?" asked Ione, cutting short the woman's garrulous speech. "I can do better than Ann Wyatt, at least."

"I'll take you up at once, Miss. Maybe you're his sister?"

"No!" briefly.

"His sweetheart, then?" and afraid at the last moment she might be denied admission to him, Ione bowed.

"Ah, poor thing! It's powerful hard for you, then. Deed, I hope he'll recover for your sake, miss. This way, please, and I've got a nice spare room you can have—and I'm sure I'll wait on you my best. I'm really sorry for you, that I am!" and talking all the while, she led the way up the broad shallow stairs until they came to a door which Mrs. Boram opened quietly, showing the interior of a very spacious room, comfortably furnished and scrupulously clean.

A French bedstead occupied the centre of the apartment. On the bed lay Arnold with white unconscious face and closed eyes. By him sat a woman half asleep. Ione entered quickly.

"You may go," she said; "I have come to nurse Mr. Claremont. Tell me to what extent I am indebted to you?"

The woman rubbed her eyes, yawned, stretched herself, and then, sulkily, named a far larger sum than she had hoped to receive.

Ione supplemented it by several shillings, then coldly dismissing her, proceeded to draw off hat and mantle, Mrs. Boram watching her with interested eyes.

"Do you know any trustworthy person I could engage to relieve me when I feel rest necessary?" asked the girl.

"There's a cousin o' mine, miss, over at Haddington. She's out of employ jest now. She charges powerful high; but she knows her business and does her dooty by them as employs her."

"Price is no object," said Ione; "send for her at once."

"Yes, miss; my man'll drive over and fetch her, and if you'll excuse the liberty, miss, I think you'd better have a bite and a sup. You ain't looking too strong yourself."

"Bring me a glass of any wine you may have in the house. I could not eat. At what time do you expect the doctor?"

"He'll be here directly, miss. He always comes morning and evening, and it's close on his time. Now I'll get you the wine. Then I'll make you some tea as soon as the water boils. If I'd known you'd been coming, I'd ha' had all ready for you."

Then, as she hurried away, Ione found herself alone with the man for whose sake she had deserted her sister and risked all things. She never thought of the conventionalities; she remembered nothing her many friends and a cruel world might say of her conduct. She only felt she loved him; she only knew that but for Heaven's great mercy she must lose him.

Not a word did she speak, not a movement did she make, until Mrs. Boram returned with the wine. Then she simply thanked and dismissed her, and, falling on her knees beside the bed, prayed for that dear life, as never in all her twenty-one years she had prayed before; and when she rose, she bent over him, and, with ashamed eyes and crimsoned cheeks, she kissed his brow and lips. Then hid her face in her hands, half afraid that even in his unconsciousness Arnold might be aware of her mad caresses.

Presently the doctor came—a short, stailward-looking man, apparently about forty. He looked at the girl with keen blue eyes, and said in a quick, sharp way:

"Mrs. Boram informs me that you are my

patient's fiancée; that being the case, I suppose I may safely leave him to your care."

Ione bowed; for the moment she could not speak, and Dr. Rymore went on in the same brusque way:

"I had better tell you at once that Mr. Claremont is in a most critical condition. If you wish for further advice, have it. For my own part, I do not think it necessary. What he requires is greatest care and attention, constant watchfulness. Nurse Brown will be with you shortly, she is experienced and trustworthy. If there is any change in the patient during the night, send for me. Good evening," and he went out quickly, as though he had not a moment to spare.

Ione wished he had been more sympathetic; his dry manner and sharp tones jarred on her tortured heart, and with a little passionate sob she said:

"Oh, my dear one! oh, my dear one! there is no one to love you but me, no one to care if you live or die!" and she wept a little in her despair and desolation.

But she was quite composed when Nurse Brown arrived. She was a middle-aged woman, of comfortable appearance, and her very presence was a relief to the weary girl. Quietly and methodically she set to work to "straighten the room," as she called it. Then she examined the medicine bottles, read the instructions Dr. Rymore had left for her; finally she turned to Ione, saying:

"You had better lie down, you look tired; and if there is any change I'll wake you. You're sure to sleep, you're so weary."

So Ione, who really could scarcely lift her heavy lids, allowed herself to be made comfortable on the couch, and slept so long that the full morning light was streaming into the room when she awoke. Nurse Brown was sitting erect and wide awake. She turned with a smile as Ione rubbed her eyes and said, with self-reproach:

"Oh, why did I sleep so long? How selfish you must have thought me!"

"Not at all, Miss. I'm used to this sort of thing, and you are not. I wouldn't have roused you for a great deal, because, if you hadn't slept, I should have had two patients on my hands instead of one. You were fairly exhausted; lie there a little while longer. Cousin Boram is getting your breakfast ready; when you've had that, I'll take a spell of rest, and you shall do the watching. He," with a glance at Arnold, "must not be left a moment. Afterwards you must take a walk. Excuse my boldness, Miss; but you're young and inexperienced, and so need someone to look after you. Haven't you got a friend or a sister who could stay with you in your trouble?"

Thinking of Hester, Ione flushed hotly, and a sharp pain filled her heart. By her own fault, she had lost that dear guide and friend. Then, with a little negative gesture, she said:

"I have no one; I am all alone in the world!"

"Poor child! for your sake, as well as for his own, I hope the poor gentleman will recover. You are too young and pretty to have no protector. Ah! here is Cousin Boram; now let me see you make a good meal, or I won't trust my patient to your care!"

And when Ione had broken her fast, the nurse went to her own room to snatch a little necessary rest; and the girl watched beside the man she loved, praying all the while in her heavy heart that Heaven would be merciful to him and to her.

Day followed day in slow, sad succession. Sometimes they feared Arnold was dead, he lay so motionless; and, at such times, Ione would pace to and fro, clasping her burning temples with trembling hands. Not crying or sobbing, because her anguish was too great to admit of weeping.

And then, one blessed morning, as she sat alone by his bed, he opened his eyes and knew,

her. A look of surprise, not unmingled with pleasure, crossed his face, and he put out a feeble hand. She took and clasped it in her own, but not a word did she speak, remembering Dr. Rymore's instructions. But a great and tremulous joy possessed her; he would live, and perhaps—not all at once, but by slow degrees—he would learn to love her and understand all her devotion to him.

She watched with almost maternal care whilst he fell asleep, a faint smile playing about his mouth; and from that hour his recovery was sure though slow. Not a word had passed between them as to her coming; but she knew that his eyes followed her with pleasure, and that his weak voice took a tenderer tone when he addressed her, and she was almost content to wait for the love to come. One day she had been reading to him, when he said, suddenly,—

"What has become of Garwood? Do you know, Miss Ione?"

"I saw him on the day that I came to Hedworth. I have heard nothing of him since. It was he who wounded you?"

"Yes, but it was a fair fight, and I was the one to plan it. He was not to blame, poor brute! He was mad with misery, and I was bent upon revenging her wrongs. I could not think that she had ever given him cause for offence. I see now what a fool I was. I ought never to have interfered between them—and she, if she loved once, would love for all time. Poor soul! I wonder does she know the truth!"

"No, I have never breathed it to her; I have never told her that I have seen Mortimer; she believes him still prosperous and unforgiving."

Silence for awhile, then Arnold said,—

"How did you learn about my—my accident?"

"Through the medium of the newspapers." "Why did you come?" he asked, and gently touched her hand.

Over face and brow rushed the burning blood.

"Do not ask!"

"But I must. Ione, why should you, of all I know, leave everything for my sake? I had deserved nothing of you. I had persecuted Hester and neglected you. Why was it, Ione?"

She snatched her hand away, and hid her troubled face; then, rising, she went hastily to the window, and he felt rather than saw that she was crying.

"I want to speak to you," he said, "and how can I do so when you stand at such a distance—and my voice is so weak? Come here, Ione, kneel down, so that your face is level with mine."

Trembling in every limb, she obeyed; he put one weak hand beneath her chin, and looked earnestly into her shy eyes.

"Was it because you loved me, dear? May I hope so much?"

She hid her face in the coverlet and wept aloud.

"You say this because you have guessed my secret, and are sorry for me," she sobbed. "Oh, let me go away; you can spare me now!"

"I am not so sure of that, Ione; having been so petted and spoiled by you, I am afraid I should never again be content with the old life. See, dear, I do not profess to care for you as a little while ago I cared for Hester; but the scales have fallen from my eyes—and I am so grateful to you for your goodness, so sure that I can make your happiness if only you will say yes, and that in time the love will come, that I am bold to ask you to be my wife. What are you going to say to me, dear?"

She laid her soft cheek to his, and whilst she still wept, but now for very joy, asked:

"What do you wish me to say?"

"That you love and trust me, that you will be my wife!"

The pretty face, instinct with tenderness, was bowed above his.

"I love you!" she said, scarcely above her breath. "Oh, yes, I love you with all my heart!"

"And you can trust me, knowing all my past as you do?"

"If I did not, I should pray to die!"

"Then kiss me, sweetheart, who is soon to be my wife; there is no other woman who would have done for me what you have done." And as she timidly kissed him she looked so pretty, so gentle, that he felt it would not be so hard a task to love her. And she—well, she held his hand in a gentle clasp, and watched him as he fell asleep; and all her heart grew soft, and all her conscience cried out to her to send Hester some fond message.

She remembered, with a sudden pang, how her sister had toiled for her early and late, when she herself was but a young thing; and she was ashamed of her base ingratitude and harshness.

That night she wrote Hester, confessing her sins against her, her mad jealousy, her knowledge of Mortimer's position, her culpable ignorance of his present whereabouts, and ended with a wild petition for pardon.

Poor Hester! it almost broke her heart to think of her husband as poor—perhaps starving—and, even to her generous nature, it was difficult to forgive Ione's cruel conduct; and to herself she said:

"It is all my fault; I should have been more patient. I should have kept more loyally to my marriage vows."

To Arnold lying on his sick bed it occurred that Ione had risked even her good name in coming to his rescue, and had counted the world's opinion as nought for his sake.

His heart was very tender towards her then. (In a little while he would love her well and wonder over his previous infatuation.) What recompense could he give her?

Should he permit her to return to her old life, endure the ill-natured criticisms of her acquaintances. A thousand times no. So that night, as he held her hand, he said:

"Ione, Rymore tells me I may get up to-morrow; in a few days I may go out. Don't you think our first journey should be to church? I am not going back to town without my wife!"

She looked at him, startled and trembling.

"Oh, Arnold! So soon?"

"A good deed cannot be done too early," smiling. "You love me—you have full confidence in me? What reason is there to delay our marriage?"

"None," she was obliged, timidly, to confess.

"Then make your preparations as quickly as possible. They won't be very arduous, seeing how quiet a wedding ours will be."

And so a week later they were married.

CHAPTER VII.

In her newborn happiness Ione went to Hester.

"Let us be friends," she said, and, although she had suffered cruelly because of her sister, Hester had no harsh word to say; her only reproach was, "Why did you not tell me all the truth long ago, Ione? I might have found my poor boy then. Now, whilst I live in luxury, he may even want bread. Oh, my husband! oh, my husband! life is too cruel!" He had been harsh and unjust to her. He had driven her from home by his persistent ill-temper and caprices, and yet she loved him.

She harboured no angry thought against him. Oh, love of woman passing all understanding! Oh, patience exceeding all comprehension!

"Ione," she said, "you should not have kept these things from me; and forgive me if I say that my husband did not sin against Arnold Claremont when he met him face to face. Let the matter rest there! You are happy;

I pray you always may be so. We shall not often meet. In your new and prosperous life you will half forget me and my woes. It is better so; and as for me—as for me, I have but one purpose in life, and that is to find Mortimer!"

So they parted, and Ione went on her bridal tour, scarce remembering the sister whose love had been her shield; and Hester spent a small fortune in advertising. She worded all her appeals so that Mortimer and Mortimer only would understand them. But no answer ever came—he did not see the papers then, he had no money to expend upon them. Only as some consolation to him in his bitter need and sorrow he learnt that Claremont lived, and that he had made Ione his wife.

He felt more at rest after that. He could face the world again free, thank Heaven, of bloodguiltiness. And so with renewed courage he set to work to find employment.

But there seemed no opening for him. There were so many applicants, so few vacancies; and, presently, when hope was dead in his heart, and pride was humbled to the very dust, he would have been glad to obtain the merest wage, the most menial labour, but even that was denied him.

One by one his little possessions found their way to the pawnbroker's, until he had nothing left that the Hebrew would advance a penny upon.

Then he felt the end was near. Yet night after night he dragged his weary limbs to the theatre doors, and watched her enter and return. He knew every line and change of that dear face, as he never had known it in his happier days.

She never saw him as she swept by him in her velvet and furs. She passed him often, so close he could have touched her, but how was she to guess that that shabby crouching figure was her husband's, that those hungry eyes and that wasted face was Mortimer's!

And then there came a day when he found himself utterly penniless. He had nothing left to pawn or sell; he had not tasted food for twenty-four bitter hours; he was weak and ill; he could not think collectedly; he scarce could drag his weary limbs along.

Ah, well, there was the river! But first he would see her, and in his heart wish her good-bye. Then he would go away, and after that she would be free.

And so that night he made his slow and painful journey to her home. He crept to the door, and then with a low moan of bitterest pain and shame, he sank exhausted upon the steps.

A little later Hester came home; and dismissing her carriage, drew up her skirts, and went towards the house. As the door opened to her, the light revealed a prostrate form, shabbily and insufficiently clad.

She shrank back, thinking perhaps a drunken tramp had taken refuge there; then, gathering courage, she went nearer, caught the outline of his face, and knew, all in a moment, that Mortimer had come back to her. She flung herself down upon her knees, there in the snow, beside him.

"Husband! husband!" she wailed, "speak to me! speak to me—your wicked, unhappy, despairing wife. Will you ever forgive me, my dear, my dear?" And when he did not answer all her strength forsook her, so that she wept like a beaten child, and kissed him madly between her tears.

Her servants came out to her. She lifted her head then.

"This is your master," she said, simply. "Carry him to my room; and you, Jenkins, go for a doctor."

She followed them upstairs. With tender hands she ministered to his comfort. All his shortcomings were forgotten, all his harshness blotted out. He was her husband, and that was all she remembered. The doctor came, ordering every nourishment.

"He is half-starved!" he said, and the heart within her bled when she thought how

luxuriously she had lived whilst he went hungry.

When he woke to consciousness she was bending over him, and her eyes were full of tenderness. She sank on her knees beside him.

"Forgive me," she said, brokenly. "Oh! love of my heart, forgive me! I thought I was acting for the best, and now I shall never forgive myself for my intolerance and cruelty!"

As she knelt and wept, he laid one thin hand upon her head.

"I am not worthy so much as to look upon you. In the old days I was a devil to you, and you repay all my brutality with goodness and gentleness. Hester! Hester! why do not you curse me?"

"I love you!" she answered. "I love you! Let us kiss and forget all the evil that has come and gone; and till you are strong again I shall be my joy to work for you. Here—here, on my breast, dear heart, find again the peace we both have lost so long! Let me toil for you, watch by you, serve you from morn to night, year in and year out. Only love me, and I shall be content!"

Only love her! Oh, great Heaven! how could he now prove she was dear to him! Weak, prostrate, penniless as he was, what could he do to prove his devotion? Nothing! His days of labour were over, never any more could he serve her. All through his life, although he did not then know it, he must be a burden upon her.

Year in and year out he would lie helpless upon his couch whilst she cheerfully laboured for him, until he came to know her as she was in all the beauty and purity of her nature, until he came to glorify her as a saint, and learned at last the littleness of his own nature, and the worth of woman's love!

And Hester? Well, her husband was given back to her arms, and though life could never be very glad to either of them again, yet she was not wholly unhappy.

"Through passionate duty love springs higher." And in performance of her duty, and tender care of her husband, she found the only joy left to her. And he? Well, he worshipped her now; but none the less, her life was a tragedy, only no one knew it save herself and Heaven!

[THE END.]

TO BE IN LOVE

The view which the ordinary young person takes of love is all wrong. She thinks that being in love brings happiness, and therefore she takes her lantern and goes a-hunting for it. Alas! To many, being in love brings pain—more pain than gladness, and only the wise ones know how to transform the pain into joy of suffering for the loved one. To be in love is to know anxiety in the hour of his illness and apprehension over his weakness; to feel responsibility, which you must bear for yourself. No one can even share it with you to lighten your burden. To be in love is to have half your life go with him when the door closes, and to live only for his return. It is to have all your selfish desires lose shape and resolve themselves into ambitions for him. It is to find your happiness in his; for your ideals to take a more virile form; your hopes a loftier aspect. It is to forget yourself and your eager search for happiness, and to merge your whole existence into a prayer to do more, not for the approval of your little world, but closing the door on all in the great Without, to pour yourself and all that you are and all that you hope to be into the small and sacred Within—for his sake.

That is to be in love.

Do Wives Confide

Women, as a rule, do not take their husbands into their confidences frankly, naturally, and willingly. They seem to think it proper, under all circumstances, to keep back a great deal, that there are many things a man ought not to know. This is wrong. But some degree of this spirit is inherent in every woman, a feeling that something must remain to them, unyielded, as a sort of guarantee of their identity. This much taxed virtue of yielding has become an aggressive faculty in woman's heredity, and has often pressed her close upon the borders of hypocrisy. One can never feel very sure of having all of a woman's confidence about anything; she always feels better and less poor if a small and valuable remnant is in her keeping.

This has been many times spoken and written about by lawyers, and for this reason, a woman is always considered a much more difficult "limb of the law" than a man. An eminent lawyer, of many years' experience, gives it as his conclusion that it is simply "impossible to get out of any woman 'the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.' They, more certainly and frequently than men, tell 'the truth' and 'nothing but the truth,' but 'the whole truth' not all the lawyers in Christendom can ever get from a woman." Hence, one might conclude that, "an honest confession" is good for a woman's soul. This policy of keeping back a part of every confidence can be traced back to any generation in which are given the histories of women characters. It was the doom of Sapphira, as well as her husband, in that instance, who "kept back part of the price of the land."

Women cling to this partly through heredity and partly through habit and a traditional courtesy. But it is a disloyal spirit when it is carried beyond the needs of discretion, and truly a lamentable dishonesty when borne out in spirit and disposition to their husbands.

How different is a man's confidence. He comes to his wife first, gives her the cream of his confidence, unshaken, unexperienced upon, literally pours it out, all of it, and expects something in return. It is so frank, so willing, so natural, so loyal, and hence so complimentary, and all this insures its respect. He does not tell it as a wearisome, thought-worn theme, nor in "I think you might help me in this" kind of style, but in a proud and expectant manner, implying the compliment which he believes is truth. For when a man compliments his wife I believe he means it, that he thinks his wife has some superior ideas or knowledge about the matter. But if she knows nothing whatever about it, never heard of the business before, his confidence is the same, and his belief in her ability to help him in some way as firm as though she were the best-informed authority upon the subject. A man always has a reliant faith in woman's mysterious intuition, trusting to this for, at least, a wise suggestion, knowing that "woman's wisdom comes by instinct." If he can gain nothing else he makes himself satisfied and blest in an abundance of sympathy, for this a man must always have.

Is there anything in such a confidence that savours of weakness, or that suggests aught but the most manly love and truthful devotion?

'Tis not the strong-minded, go-ahead, self-possessed, self-willed woman that succeeds, or whose husband succeeds, but the one in whose capacity as a wife her husband finds his complement.

A woman wearing the dignity of a wife should have too much tact, too much inborn sense, to deluge her husband with a recital of petty insignificant worries that cannot be helped or undone by the telling; but let her take to him, in a whole-souled confidence, any worthy grievance, however small, and ninety-nine out of every hundred men worth counting will respect it and lend help and comfort.

Gems

"LIFT your head to heaven, and see that not one of the mortals who are there immortal arrived thither except by continual afflictions and troubles. Say often in the midst of your contradictions: This is the way to heaven. I see the harbour, and I am sure that storms cannot hinder me from reaching it."

EVERY crime and every scourge that is wielded by an angry Providence for the chastisement of man is an appointed instrument for tempering human souls in the seven-times heated furnace of affliction, up to the standard of angelic and archangelic virtue.

It is not said that after keeping God's commandments but in keeping them, there is great reward. God has linked these two things together, and no man can separate them—obedience and peace.

THE heights of spiritual attainment can only be safely reached by those who begin low down and mount upward by patient continuance in well doing, by daily faithfulness in that which is least.

TEACH self-denial, and make its practice pleasurable, and you create for the world a destiny more sublime than ever issued from the brain of the wildest dreamer.

WHERE temperament will not serve as an excuse, environment will, and with circumstances is sure to cover everything.

THE nobleness of our actions depends more upon the motive which prompts them than upon the deeds, themselves.

THE union of energy and wisdom makes the completest character and the most powerful life.

MIZPAH

"The Lord watch between me and thee when we are absent one from another" (Gen. xxxi. 49).

Go thou thy way, and I go mine;

Apart, yet not afar;

Only a thin veil hangs between

The pathways where we are.

And "God keep watch 'tween thee and me"—

This is my prayer.

He looks thy way, He looketh mine,

And keeps us near.

I know not where thy road may lie,

Or which way mine will be;

If mine will be through parching sands,

And thine beside the sea;

Yet God keep watch 'tween thee and me,

So never fear.

He holds thy hand, He claspeth mine,

And keeps us near.

Should wealth and fame, perchance, be thine,

And my lot lowly be;

Or you be sad and sorrowful,

And glory be for me,

Yet God keeps watch 'tween thee and me;

Both be His care.

One arm round thee and one round me

Will keep us near.

I sigh sometimes, to see thy face,

But since this may not be,

I'll leave thee to the care of Him

Who cares for thee and me.

"I'll keep you both beneath My wings—

This comforts, dear.

One wing o'er thee and one o'er me;

So are we near.

And though our paths be separate,

And thy way is not mine,

Yet, coming to the mercy seat,

My soul will meet with thine.

And "God keep watch 'tween thee and me,"

I'll whisper there.

He blessed thee, and He bleaseth me,

And we are near.

Gleanings

A WOMAN, like an echo, will have the last word.

COLD cream was introduced by Galen 1,800 years ago.

SOUND SLEEP.—We sleep the soundest between three and five o'clock in the morning. An hour or two after going to bed you sleep very soundly; then your slumber grows gradually lighter, and it is easy enough to waken you at one or two o'clock. But when four o'clock comes you are in such a state of somnolence that it would take a great deal to waken you.

HE SUCCEEDED.—It is told that the first use of coffee by man was made by the prior of a convent. He was told by a goatherd of the exciting effect of the berries when eaten by his goats, so he thought he would try them and see if he could not keep his monks awake during their devotions. He succeeded admirably and brought coffee into the way of earning its world-wide reputation.

"PERFECT BEAUTY."—The idea of perfect beauty is somewhat varied in different parts of the world. In the Northern parts of China a flat face, high cheek bones, and large ears are thought essential. A Northern Indian prefers a broad, flat face, small eyes, high cheek bones, a narrow forehead, large chin, and a hook nose. The Siamese like tiny noses, big mouths, and high cheek bones.

INGENUOUS DECEPTIONS.—So great is the demand for rare butterflies that ingenious deception regarding them is practised by dealers. Ordinary butterflies are caught and killed; then girls are employed to smear the gauzy wings with thin mucilage and sprinkle fine metallic powder of various colours on the wings. In this way the collector can be supplied with the most beautiful specimens almost while he waits.

"LOYDS."—"Lloyds," the well-known corporation employed in marine insurance, and having a worldwide agency for the collection of marine intelligence, had its origin in the enterprise of Edward Lloyd, a London coffee-house keeper, whose place, opened in 1688, became a resort for shipowners and ship captains. The insurance feature of "Lloyds" originated from a method of mutually insuring or "underwriting" each others' shipping risks by the owners frequenting Lloyd's establishment. Their method of doing this was to subscribe or "underwrite" their names to a document which stated the amounts that each was willing to give in the event of disaster to the risk. The present system of "Lloyds" does not differ in any essential particular from the method employed at the beginning, but it is much better organised, and the business has been vastly increased in volume. Its radius of operation now practically covers the whole world.

NAUTICAL TERMS.—An old "tar" has recently prepared a handbook of nautical terms for the use of persons who intend to follow the sea. In order to correct popular belief our author gravely asserts that the berth on board ship do not necessarily add to the census. The hatchways are not hens' nests. The way of the ship is not the extent of her avoirdupois. The boatswain does not pipe all hands with a meerscham. The ship does not have a wake over a dead calm. The swell of a ship's side is not caused by dropy, nor is the taper of a bowsprit a tallow candle. The hold is not the vessel's grip. The trough of the sea is not dug out of the ship's log. The crest of a wave is not an indication of its rank. The buoy is not the captain's son. The men are not beat to quarters with a club. Ships are never boarded at hotels. The bow of a ship is not evidence of politeness. A sailor's stockings are never manufactured from a yarn of his own spinning. The sails of a ship are not made by an auctioneer, nor are the stays constructed by a milliner.

THERE is no such thing as total depravity. Every man has something in him to show God made him.

ONE reason why the road to ruin is broad, is to accommodate the great amount of traffic in that direction.

A HUMBUG is like a bladder—good for nothing until it is blown out, and then good for nothing when it is pricked.

WHEN ICE CATCHES FIRE.—Strange as it may seem, it is possible to light your cigar by means of ice. Take a piece of clear ice, about one inch thick, cut it into the shape of a disc, and with the palms of the hands melt its two sides convex, giving it the form of a double convex lens, or burning-glass. Now, if the sun will only condescend to shine, focus his rays on the end of your cigar, and the feat is done.

OLD AGE.—Hippocrates, who lived 104 years, recommended baths, daily frictions, and exercise for the health. Galen, who reached the age of 140 without being ill, had certain rules for preserving the health which he never broke. Asclepiades guaranteed to live to a great age without indisposition, and when at length he died, 150 years old, it was the result of a fall. Democritus asserted that he reached his 104 years through eating honey and anointing his body with oil.

HERBS IN MEDICINE.—Among the many ancient country customs that are dying out or being driven into utter obscurity by the progress of the times, none is more decadent than the popular use of herbs as a medicine. Fifty years ago a knowledge of the curative properties of "roots an' yerbs" cut no small figure in the list of a good farmwife's accomplishments, and every thrifty farmhouse garret was redolent of endless vegetable cure-alls, hanging in dry bunches from the rafters. To-day, except in remote places, the quaint old remedies are without honour and their benefits forgotten, while even the memory of their nature is fast falling into the realm of folk-lore.

FOR THE SERVANTLESS HOUSEHOLD.—A company has been organised which is expected to solve once and for all the eating problem as it faces the bachelor and the servantless household. The company guarantees to send a hot meal anywhere, at any time, at a moderate cost, the dinner to be as good as can be got in any of the first-class restaurants. Not only is the dinner sent, but with it goes a complete table service, silver, glass, and napery. The idea in itself is not particularly new, but the price for which it is done is surprisingly small. A dinner for one, comprising soup, entrée, roast and sweet, is sent out for two shillings. Breakfast costs a shilling and lunch a shilling and sixpence. The company undertakes to supply all the meals of a household at a guinea per week for each one. It has central kitchen, where the food is prepared, and specially-constructed baskets, so arranged that the hot dishes will stay hot and the cold dishes cold.

THIN HAIR.—Girls are beginning to complain of scanty hair. Boys have suffered under the infliction for some time already. Whatever may be the cause of men's incipient baldness, there is no doubt that the loss of the ladies' locks comes from incessant crimping and waving. The hair breaks off after a time, and instead of long tresses the unfortunate fair one finds herself with a number of irrepressible ends and wisps of hair that stick out in all kinds of wrong directions. It is a fact that our mothers possessed better hair than the girls of to-day. The late Empress of Austria to the hour of her death owned hair that fell below her knees; the young Duchess of Uzès's hair falls to her feet, but she can only be classed as a happy exception. A plainer style of hair dressing will do much to restore the beauty of one woman's hair, a beauty so great that nothing should be allowed to stand in the way of its improvement.

BISCUITS, underdone steak or mutton chops, and half a pint of mild ale at eight a.m., was the regular breakfast of Queen Elizabeth and Lady Jane Grey.

USEFUL IN SUMMER.—A recent invention is a refrigerating egg, as it might be called. It is an ovoid capsule of nickel-plated copper about the size of a hen's egg, hollow, and nearly filled with water. For use it is frozen, so that its contents become ice. If you have a glass of milk that is not cold enough, you do not like to put ice into it, because dilution with water spoils the beverage, but if you have one of these eggs handy you may drop it into the glass, and in a few moments the liquid is reduced to the desired temperature.

HAIR-POWDER.—Hair-powder is said to have had its origin from some of the ballad-singers at a fair at St. Germain, who whitened their heads in order to make themselves ridiculous. In 1780 hair-dressing assumed mountainous proportions, and rose from 1ft. to 3ft. in height. It is said that ladies brushed and combed their hair only about once in eight weeks, and slept in calashes, or large caps, which protected the grease and powder from being disturbed. Hair-dressers were in such demand that it became necessary to employ their services many days before the event for which the head was to be dressed occurred. There are examples in history of princes who, for the sake of display, powdered their heads with gold filings; and this custom has its modern duplicate in the use of gold-dust powder, which ladies use for the purpose of brightening their hair on evening occasions at the theatres and balls.

"BEAUTY SPOTS."—The ancient custom of beautifying the face by means of paint and powder was followed in the seventeenth century by the curious whim of decking the face with beauty-spots, or patches, fashioned from black silk or velvet, and afterwards from court plaster, and shaped in a variety of ways, circles, crosses and crescents being among the most popular designs, but even chariots and horses, cut out of plaster, were pasted on to the powdered cheeks of beauties of the day. At first women wore patches on the face only, but afterwards, a cynical remark from a clergyman was, oddly enough, the means of their using patches also on the neck and shoulders. The preacher, Massillon, in declaiming against the vanities of the toilet table, asked, in derision, why women did not plaster their necks and shoulders as well as their faces with patches, and it is said that this home-thrust from the pulpit actually led to the ridiculed notion being adopted.

STEADILY MOVING.—Slowly but surely the human mouth is moving toward the left of the face, which will in time bring it somewhere in the neighbourhood of the left ear. All the five great races of man have an uncontrollable tendency to eat with the teeth which grow from the left jaws. This wears out the left teeth more rapidly than those on the right side of the mouth, and this in turn gives the upper and lower jaws an inclination toward the left. It is the expressed opinion of many scientists who are foremost in the world's roll of professional honour that in the course of time the mouth, from causes above mentioned, will have completely changed its position and that it will then be situated rather nearer the left ear than to the nose.

DURING a vice-regal tour in the West of Ireland, one of the suite, who had been told that the natives would be sure to agree with anything and everything he said to them, determined to test the truth of the assertion. Accordingly, in one of the coasting trips with which the tour was interspersed, and in which the wind was blowing half a gale, he shouted to the Irish pilot, "There's very little wind." The answer came back at once: "Thrus for you, sir. But what little there is, is very strong."

HER MISTAKE

By EFFIE ADELAIDE ROWLANDS.

Author of 'The Flower of Fate,' 'Woman Against Woman,' etc., etc.

SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS CHAPTERS.

Mr William Carruthers has married a second time a woman of means, but lacking that unconscious refinement and indefinable something that money can never give. She has a daughter, Brenda Grant, and it is early apparent that the introduction of this young lady into the household at Thickthorn bodes no good for the beautiful and sympathetic Hope Carruthers, Sir William's daughter by his first wife. On the day the story opens a young man has met with a serious accident in the hunting field. A stranger, he is brought to Thickthorn, and before the night is out is in the throes of delirium tremens. The Earl of Hampshire dies suddenly, and by his will his fortune goes to Hope Carruthers. Hugh Christie, hearing of Hope's good luck, decides at once to ask her to be his wife. Philip Leicester, the stranger, is making slow progress towards recovery, and finds much solace and comfort in Hope's society. Meanwhile preparations are going forward for the marriage, and Hugh Christie is as doubtful as a lover should be. Brenda Grant, disappointed at Hugh proposing to Hope, has left Thickthorn, and her absence really bodes no good for the happiness of the heroine.

CHAPTER XIII.

BREND A found her studies in Greek and her searchings into other erudite matter a trifle fatiguing, more particularly when Lord Gainsborough suddenly took his departure to Italy for a while.

Brenda was of a hopeful disposition, and she had, indeed, made extraordinary progress with the cold, quiet old aristocrat; but, despite this, the plan she had set herself was not advanced one iota.

She spent Christmas at Thickthorn, and indulged in a series of very bad tempers; and then, when she heard Hope had recovered and had returned to London, she wrote and invited herself as a guest to the pretty house in Cadogan Square. Needless to say, she received a warmly-expressed letter, bidding her come at once.

Hope was honestly glad to see her step-sister.

"She will be something bright and amusing for Hugh," she thought to herself, almost unconscious that she did think it. She was still far from strong, and her feebleness was a great grief to her, for she could not accompany Hugh to many of the places to which they were invited, and he did not scruple to let her see that it was a relief to be without her under such circumstances.

Brenda's quick, light eyes read Hope's face like a book.

"It is the beginning of the end," she said to herself, as she looked at the pale, delicate face, with its violet eyes, full of a wistfulness that was almost sadness, and an expression on the young features that told a tale already of much thought—thought that was not untroubled. There was not a particle of pity in Brenda's breast for the girl; the memory of her resentment was as keen as ever.

"You look quite worn and tired! What have you been doing to yourself?" she said, with the affectation of affection she always used when addressing Hope nowadays. "It is a good thing I have come to look after you, Hope, or you would be an old woman before your time. I expect you are overtaking your strength!"

In former days the feminine malice that lay beneath these words would have failed to touch her; in fact, she would have only laughed at this speech, but now Hope flushed painfully.

Only the day before Hugh had said to her—"You ought to send for your old friend, Gunter, Hope. You are looking awfully seedy. If you don't take care you will lose all your pretty looks, and a woman is worth nothing when she is no longer pretty!"

She had winced then, and she winced again now.

"Do I really look ill, Brenda?" she asked, in a low, hurried way. "I—I don't feel very strong, but—"

"Oh! you want nursing a bit, and general coddling. I remember my father used to positively wrap up my mother in cotton wool when she was ill, but young men are more thoughtless! I expect Hugh never remembers to give you your tonic, or to see that you don't overture yourself. It is a very true but a very selfish trait in a man's character that illness always bores him."

Hope's hand shook. She was pouring out a cup of tea at the moment, and Brenda was removing her furs as she said this in a brisk, laughing way.

"One woman is worth four men in the question of thought and unselfishness!" she cried, airily.

Hope's lip quivered a little.

"Hugh is—very kind and thoughtful," she said. Then, with a little laugh which was not very mirthful, "I will not let him fuss about me too much. You know I was never ill in my life, Brenda, and I can't bear to consider myself an invalid."

"Quite right, my dear!" Brenda said, promptly, eating her cake with a relish, and surveying her own reflection in a mirror near with much satisfaction. Really her figure looked admirable in her brown velvet dress, and she had never worn a more becoming hat and veil. Hope was quite painfully thin, and her hair seemed to have lost its brightness; her hair seemed to have lost its brightness; gown was unattractive. It was certainly unfortunate that Hope had been compelled to wear mourning so frequently during the last year. It was not becoming to her—at least as she was now, Brenda opined.

"Don't think I want to asperse your beloved," she cried, with a laugh that was not very sincere or musical. "Pas si bête! All young wives adore their husbands, and woe betide the unlucky person who ventures to say a word about them that is not absolute adulation!"

Hope drank her tea mechanically. It struck her for the moment that Brenda was not so nice to-day as she had been when they were last together; but Hope simply could not harbour a thought that was ungenerous, and the next moment she was blaming herself.

"I feel tired and out of sorts," she said to herself. "I—I imagine things. It is very silly of me!"

And with an effort she flung off her depression.

"Tell me all about Thickthorn. Daddy is really well, you say; and have the runs been good? And how are the horses and all the servants? You seem to bring a whiff of the dear old place with you, Brenda," she chatted on as gaily as she could. "I heard from Clara the other morning. She and her Freddy are as happy as the day is long. I expect they will be back soon. They have taken a charming house for the season."

Brenda, having given the first of her many digs, was content for the moment, and chatted away also in a bright fashion.

They were on the subject of dress when the door was opened, and Mr. Dornton was announced.

"I have brought a great friend of mine, Mrs. Christie," the Squire said, as Hope greeted him warmly. "You know him also. Where is he? Phillip, Phillip, where are you?"

"I was having an interview with your son on the landing, Mrs. Christie," Philip Leicester said, as he came through the curtained doorway. "I have a weakness for babies."

"And mine is an angel!" Hope cried, blushing and laughing.

It was very pleasant to see him again, and to feel his warm, firm hand-clasp. Her depression vanished altogether.

Brenda looked keenly at Mr. Leicester as they were introduced.

"A splendid man!" she said to herself, critically. "What a head, what eyes! Reminds me of someone. Who is it? She began talking to him easily, while Mr. Dornton carried Hope away into a corner to have a moment with her all to himself.

"You look very pale, my dear!" the Squire cried. "Why not come down to Gunnersgate for a few days? Do you all the good in the world."

"I am not very well, but I shall be better soon. The cares of domestic life, you see, dear Mr. Dornton—they are making me old and ugly!"

"Old and ugly! Heaven bless me!" cried the Squire, kissing her unceremoniously. "You lovely little thing you. How dare you talk about such heresy, eh?" and he shook the slender figure gently. "Now come, my dear, give me a promise. I will provide all sorts of entertainment for you. Bring all your possessions, your baby, your husband, Miss Grant—only come. I am very lonely, and it will be a charity."

"You are a dear old humbug," Hope said, severely; and then she sighed, quickly, "I should love it if Hugh will."

"To be sure, to be sure," interrupted the Squire, promptly. "Of course, you must consult your husband, like a dutiful little wife. Philip Leicester has promised to come for a few days. I have made him snatch a holiday; he has been working so hard down at Meckington. Did you hear about the way he stopped the strike? But of course you did; all the world knows. Heaven bless me, but I am fond of him. Plucky lad, my dear; good lad—good as gold, and handsome as a king too. Best lad in the world!"

Hope was assenting warmly to this when her face coloured and her eyes lit up.

Hugh came into the room at this moment followed by a tall, erect figure with a face that was clean cut as a marble statue, and almost as impenetrable.

"Hope, dear, here is my cousin Gainsborough! I met him coming to pay you a visit, and I escorted him here myself."

Brenda looked quite pretty for the moment. She forgot Philip, who had been interesting her, and even forgot to be gratified at the warmth of Hugh's greeting.

She had not imagined the Marquis would return for another fortnight.

Lord Gainsborough said some very pretty words to Hope. There was always a wondrous courtesy about him, and now there was almost a touch of tenderness in his clear, resonant voice.

He took few likings, but Hope's face and manner had charmed him from the first.

"I have come to see this wonderful baby! With such a mother, it must be the sweetest and prettiest child in the world!" he said, as he held Hope's little hand and kissed it with an old-fashioned reverence.

"I am afraid he is not very pretty," Hope said, shyly, as she blushed again.

Then she turned to Hugh and asked him to see that the child was brought in. Then, as Mr. Dornton and the Marquis greeted one another warmly, she crossed over to Philip as Hugh came back, and began an eager chat with Brenda.

"You will now be able to have another interview with my son and heir, Mr. Leicester," Hope said, lightly.

She looked up at him as she spoke and was astonished and a little alarmed to see that his face had become absolutely pallid, even to his lips, which showed beneath his moustache.

Philip was gazing in a fixed way before him; but as she spoke he moved his head.

"I am ready for half-a-dozen interviews,



THE RIFT WITHIN THE LUTE.

Mrs. Christie," he said, but Hope saw that he spoke with an effort.

"Mr. Leicester," she said, hurriedly, almost in a whisper, "I—I am afraid you are ill! You are so pale. Will you sit down? Shall I—"

Philip shivered.

She saw him clench his hands and set his teeth as though he were conquering some great pain; then he turned to her resolutely.

"You are always kind, always thoughtful! I was ill for the moment. I am better now. I have never been stronger in my life than I am now!"

She had put out her hand and he clasped it in his firmly, quietly.

The entrance of the nurse and baby came at an opportune moment.

"I think I must exhibit my treasure myself," Hope said, and the bundle of soft lace and silk was transferred to her slender arms.

Philip was conscious of a sudden throb and a pang at his heart as he saw her standing there—so young, so lovely, so fragile, with her own delicate face bent down over the tiny one pillowed on her arms.

"Heaven bless her!" he said to himself, with a sort of passionate eagerness.

He dared not let his eyes rest on her too long, and he was grateful to Brenda for claiming his attention.

His pallor was gone; he was himself to all outward appearances. No one looking at his handsome face, at his quiet, dignified bearing, would have imagined that he had just experienced one of the greatest moments of silent suffering a man could be called upon to endure.

"I am afraid I don't know much about babies," Brenda cried, in a sort of frank, pleasant fashion which she had cultivated lately.

"Books are more in Miss Grant's line," Lord Gainsborough said, as he turned from

his survey of the baby, and looked across at her.

As he did so his glance fell on Philip, who had advanced, and was smiling down at Hope's treasure.

The Marquis started. He did not heed Brenda's remark.

Almost involuntarily, like one speaking in a dream, he turned towards the Squire.

"Who is that?" he asked, in a low, hurried way.

Mr. Dornton was delighted.

He gave Lord Gainsborough a few words about the "lad," and ended by slapping Philip heartily on the back.

"Let me introduce my young friend, Philip Leicester, to you, Lord Gainsborough. Philip, leave that baby alone. Do you want to thrash him as you did that rascal Bradley?"

The Squire chuckled. He was never tired of chuckling on the story of how Philip settled matters with Bradley. It had been an action after his own heart.

Philip lifted his handsome, picturesque face, and reared his noble head proudly.

For one moment his marvellous blue eyes looked straight into the cold, grey ones before him. Then he bowed his head.

"It is an honour to be permitted an introduction to Lord Gainsborough!" he said, quietly, coldly, courteously.

The Marquis stood for a moment silent, his eyes riveted, as it were, to the young man's face. Then he spoke slowly, as with an effort.

"The honour is on my side, sir," he said, and he stretched forth his hand. "A friend of such a man as Squire Dornton must be welcome to all."

Philip's right hand hung down by his side. He did not seem to see that other stretched out towards him; and as he made some other courteous remark no one noticed that the young man had failed to put his hand into that of Lord Gainsborough.

The room was small, the afternoon was dark, and the lamps were only just being brought in.

"Baby worship is over for to-day!" Hope cried, laughingly, as she relinquished the tiny creature to its nurse, and began to administer cups of tea to her guests.

Brenda had made her way over to where the Marquis was standing. Hugh and the Squire were deep in sport. Philip came up to Hope.

"I am afraid I must say good-bye, Mrs. Christie!" he said. "Perhaps you will let me come and see Master Baby another time!"

"Mr. Dornton wants me to go to Gunnersgate for a few days next week. I should like it if Hugh agrees. We shall see you there," Mr. Leicester!

Philip shook his head.

"I am afraid not," he said, quickly. "I must get back to Meckington on Saturday; there is much to be done."

Hope put her little hand into his.

"The Squire will be disappointed, and so shall I," she said, in her pretty fashion.

Philip smiled for a moment.

"I shall remember that as a consolation if I am inclined to regret my absence," he answered, and then he went away.

It did not escape Brenda's sharp notice that Lord Gainsborough's eyes followed the young man as he went from the room.

"How handsome Mr. Leicester is, Hope!" she cried, enthusiastically. "He has a face like one of Velasquez's portraits—most picturesque and attractive!"

"I did not know you were so romantic," Hugh said, with a slight sneer. He was as vain as a girl, and could not bear to hear another man admired. Hugh had not been too warm in his manner with Philip; firstly, from this very feeling of vanity; and secondly, because he saw in a glance that the overseer, as he called him, was not one of his calibre at all.

"He is a splendid chap!" the Squire said, promptly. "As good as he is handsome, and that is saying something."

Hope made no remark. She remembered Hugh's foolish words to her, and she refrained from saying, as she would have done before, how nice she thought Philip, and how much she liked him.

"He reminds me of some one!" Brenda went on, delighted to see that she was vexing Hugh. "I can't think who it is. Do you remember, Hope?"

Hope said "No" simply, and starting some other topic, for instinctively she felt that Hugh did not care for the present one, the matter dropped.

"We will go away together, Dornton; we two old fogies. My dear, take care of yourself; the pearls of life are scarce, and you are one of our pearls," Lord Gainsborough said, as he kissed Hope's little hand again. "I will send you that pamphlet, Miss Grant, and when you have read it we will have a pleasant talk together. I should like to have your opinion upon it. Good-bye, Hugh; tell your mother to write to me. Are you ready, Dornton?"

"What a marvellous man!" Brenda said, as the two gentlemen departed, and she picked up her fur. "My old room, I suppose, Hope?"

"I will come with you, dear."

Hope had put her hand on her husband's arm; she yearned for him to hold her to his heart and kiss her. She scarcely knew why this desire was upon her so strongly to-night, but it was there, and was the natural outcome of her love—the unconscious wish to let Brenda see that she was as she had described, loving and thoughtful, tender.

Hugh, however, had no intention of indulging in any such nonsense. He was a little cross, and when he was cross on any point he always let Hope share in his bad temper.

"I think him a conceited old image," he said, shortly, "and I can never think of anything to say to him!"

Brenda laughed softly as she and Hope went out of the room, and the laugh increased Hugh's ill-temper. It seemed to him to say very distinctly, "As if you could find anything to talk to about with such a man!" and though Brenda was not things that troubled him much as a rule, Hugh did not care to be reminded of the fact, particularly in such a way.

Lord Gainsborough and Mr. Dornton walked through the streets together until they came to Albert Gate.

"We part here," the Squire said, as they shook hands. "Our ways lie in different directions. I am going to dine with Leicester, and, ruefully, 'give up the evening to going through accounts. Heaven! how I hate them. Philip is very good; he lets me off as often as he can; but every now and then he declares I must look to things.'"

The Marquis held his old friend's hand. "He has a face of character. Who and what is he? I should like to meet him again!"

The Squire was delighted beyond measure. "Character! Heaven bless me, I should just think so. Come down to Gunnersgate next week if you can get away for a few days, Gainsborough. That sweet little thing is coming. Probably it will do her good, and Leicester has promised to stay a few days. Chance for you to know him better. So glad to see you!"

Lord Gainsborough shook hands heartily.

"I will think over it," he said as they parted; "most probably I will come."

He walked towards Piccadilly, a tall, erect figure, his handsome face attracting attention from the passers-by even in the dusk.

"That's Gainsborough—the great Lord Gainsborough," he heard a voice say now and then, and he touched his hat constantly to the respectful salutations he received. His head was held erect, his bearing was proud as ever.

"He is made of iron or stone, not flesh and blood!" one man said to another, as they stood to look after him, as he went on his way.

How little they knew, how little they could ever have guessed that within that cold, proud form there beat a heart as human as their own—a heart that was throbbing and aching now with a tumult of strange emotion.

"Philip Leicester," the firm lips muttered to themselves. "Philip Leicester. No, he is no Leicester, and he knew that I knew him. He looked me straight in the eyes; he threw back to me in his gaze all the bitterness, the cruelty I dealt him fifteen years ago. Heaven! I never thought the day would come when I should look upon his face again. Douglas, my son—my wronged son—if you could but know, if you could but read my heart, my remorse, my self-reproach, would you forgive, could you forget?"

He had reached his great gloomy house, and stood for a moment on the doorstep ere admitting himself with his private key. There was a grey, strange look on his face, and his hands were cold as death. "No," he said to himself, and there was a ring of something like despair in his thoughts, "No. The pride that is in me is in you; the pride that broke your mother's heart will break yours before you will yield one iota. With my own lips I spoke the words that cut you off from me for ever. With my own hands I built up the barrier which stands between us. It is your day now, Douglas, and you have renounced me as I renounced you fifteen years ago. I shall see your face, I shall bear with me the look in your eyes—your mother's eyes, stars of purity and truth, until the sands of life have slipped away. My days on earth are done!"

CHAPTER XIV.

The visit to Gunnersgate did not take place. Hugh declined absolutely to accept the Squire's invitation.

"Life is much too short," he said, lightly. "Dornton is all very well for half an hour, but after that he is a d-d bore, not to put too fine a point on it. However, if I don't go that is no reason why you should not. It will do you good, put some roses in your cheeks, Hope."

There were roses in abundance in the delicate cheeks at this speech.

Hope laughed.

"We can resign ourselves to London, eh, Brenda?"

Brenda nodded her head, and her diamonds quivered and glimmered. She looked smart and handsome in the soft-hued lamplight, and Hugh from the head of the table looked at her with much admiration. He was essentially a man who admired women, not girls. Hope's very youth, her simplicity and unsophistication, were objections in his eyes. He got impatient when he saw her wince and blush at any amusing story he chose to recite to Brenda and herself.

"Good heaven, Hope," he said to her once, crossly, "do break yourself of that absurd habit of blushing at everything that is said. It is ridiculous in a married woman, and looks as if you did it for effect!"

"I will try and remember, darling," the girl said quickly; and even as she spoke the warm flame of colour rose unconsciously to her face. She was so sensitive, so delicately organised, her nature, her character were so rarely pure, fresh and sweet, she should have been handled with all the tender care one bestows on some exquisite flower. It was not possible to such a man to comprehend or appreciate the mental beauty of the girl he had made his wife in so wanton and selfish a way. The very fragrance of her woman's purity was a fault to him; he felt an impatient longing to see her smear her eyes with Kohl and put a cigarette between her sweet, sad lips. Her refinement and delicacy of thought and manner were, in a sense, a sort of reproach to him, and Hugh Christie

always objected to anything that made him uncomfortable.

Brenda's arrival was a perfect godsend to him. They had so much in common; they knew the same people, they liked the same things, possessed the same selfish, worldly hearts. Brenda was what Hugh called "the real good sort!" nothing prudish or particularly forward, and consequently she was a distinctly desirable companion for a man who found his home-life dreary and dull beyond all expression.

Hope was rejoiced to see her husband so lively and full of spirits, albeit there would come a not-to-be-suppressed feeling of pain that it was another, and not she, who was thus able to amuse and interest him. But since he was her life, her first thought, a desire, even though this little pain came, it could not overshadow her pleasure in seeing him pleased.

Brenda was very quick to see the faint look of annoyance that swept over Hugh's face as Hope renounced the thought of leaving town.

"How blind she is—will she be blind for ever! If she were like any other woman she must have guessed something of the truth before now!" she said to herself.

"I am delighted to do just what my host and hostess wish to do!" was her outward remark.

"A few days in the country would have done Hope good," Captain Christie said, with a delightful assumption of marital consideration. "However, wilful woman, you know—"

"I am happier here, dear," Hope said, softly, "with you; and I must go down to your mother's before the season, to say nothing of dear old Thickthorn. I can do without Gunnersgate just now."

Hugh pushed his chair away from the table a little impatiently.

"We shall be late for the Gaiety; the piece began an hour ago," he said, shortly.

"Such an hour for a burlesque!" Brenda cried, as she drew on her gloves and snapped her jewelled bangles. "Ten o'clock is quite early enough."

"I promised to call for Lady Braithwaite," Hope said, as they all rose.

"Too many for the brougham," Hugh replied. "Why not come with me in a hansom, Brenda? It is a fine night, and you are not afflicted with nerves like Hope."

Brenda laughed.

"It used to be just the other way. Do you remember, Hope, how you used to laugh at me because I was too nervous to ride with the hounds?"

"I don't think I laughed at you, Brenda," Hope said, gently. "I have the greatest sympathy with nervous folks."

Hugh had sauntered out of the room and was having his coat put on by his servant.

Brenda laid her hand on Hope's arm. "You don't mind, dear, do you, if I go with Hugh?"

Hope looked up in amazement.

"Mind, Brenda? Why should I?" she asked, almost laughingly. "It is you who should mind. When you have such a lovely gown the wheels of a hansom are literally death and destruction to frocks. I believe, au fond, that is my real reason for disliking them so much!"

Brenda bit her lip. Had another woman made this speech she would have credited her with tact and a certain amount of cleverness in fencing what she had intended to be a disagreeable moment.

But Hope was too ingenuous, too simple altogether to have spoken as she did unless she had really felt what she said, and it was annoying to Brenda's vanity to find that she had not been successful yet in planting the seeds of jealousy in Hope's heart.

Had the girl's love been less trusting, less true, she must have noticed the flirtation which was progressing well between her husband and step-sister, and Brenda had imagined every now and then that such had been the case.

This speech from Hope, however, showed she had been mistaken, and it made her angry in more ways than one.

"It is time the scales fell from her eyes," she said to herself, as Hugh put her into the basket most carefully.

From that night, how, or in what exact manner she could not tell, Hope experienced a change in her life. Hitherto Hugh had occasioned her such pain that she had felt more from sins of omission than commission. His forgetfulness, his selfishness, his indifference—all these had given her a pang now and then; but they were not lasting in their discomfort; and Hope found a quick excuse for everything. But it was different now. A sharp word before strangers, a perpetual atmosphere of discontent, a ready sneer, were new weapons brought against her in the warfare of life, and Hope's tender heart and sensitive nature seemed never to be free from the smart of one of these.

She bore it patiently for a little while, though no one knew (not even Brenda, who studied her well) what she suffered when Hugh treated her to some ill-chosen fault-finding, or sneered at her in some most definite way. She racked her brain to discover the cause; she went over all her conduct, but could find nothing in it with which to reproach herself, nothing to account for his ungenerous and unkind conduct.

Brenda waited for the moment when Hope should open her heart to her, and pour out her complaint.

"What patience!" she said to herself, shrugging her shoulders, "and all for what! Does she imagine, poor silly creature, that she can win back a man by such means, and such a man as Hugh Christie!"

Brenda laughed as she sat by her fire in the cosy bedroom appointed to her. "First let her secure her man. I expect Madame would be a little surprised if she could know, as she will some day, that her husband has been as utterly indifferent to her from the beginning as that piece of marble. He would have done better to marry me—at least, he would have been spared the reproaches that are in store for him. She will have to speak sooner or later."

The very thought that was pressing on Hope's brain at that moment.

"I must know! I must know!" she said to herself, as she lay through another long, sleepless night. "It is so terrible, he is so changed. He looked at me when we were at dinner as though he almost hated me. Oh! Hugh, Hugh! husband—love! I cannot bear this—it will drive me mad. If I have done wrong you must tell me my fault; it is my due. To live this life much longer will be impossible; and yet—yet if when I speak you tell me that your love is gone! Ah!" she shuddered, and a broken cry was wrung from her aching heart. "No, no, no, that I must not even think, not even to myself, if I would keep my brain clear to face this difficulty!"

"Your wife looks grave this morning," Brenda said to Hugh the next day. "I believe you are going to be treated to a marital catechism and lecture."

Hugh swore a little under his breath. "Go and put on your hat and coat; it is fine. We will drive down to Richmond, and have some lunch," he said, hurriedly.

"Quite like a Darby and Joan!" Brenda laughed. She went slowly away and met Hope on the stairs as she passed up.

"Will you drive this morning or this afternoon, Brenda?" the girl asked. She tried to be as cordial and pleasant as she had wont to be, but of late the conviction had been forced upon her that Brenda had added to her pain and discomfort instead of aiding her.

"I am going out with Hugh," Brenda said, lightly. "He is in a hurry."

Hope coloured.

"You will be home to lunch?" she asked, coldly.

Brenda shook her head.

"I don't know. I imagine not," she cried, as she went on her way.

Hope paused irresolute for a moment. Her hand had stolen unconsciously to her heart. There was something in Brenda's manner that had seemed to tell her her struggle was in vain, and that the truth in all its cruelty was coming to her fast.

"I will go and speak to him," she said to herself, and she went in search of her husband.

She found him in his den writing some hurried letters.

"Good heavens! how you startle me, Hope, creeping in like a ghost! Do you want anything? If so, hurry up. I am just off. Brenda wants to go to Richmond. The drive is too far for you. We shall lunch there." Hugh rattled all this off as though he were repeating a lesson. "Do you want anything?" he asked, irritably.

Hope looked at him for a moment in silence. Somehow the memory of the expression in those violet eyes lingered with Hugh Christie for many a day.

"No," she said, when she spoke, and her voice was low and heavy. "No; I want nothing. I thought I did, but—I made a mistake." And, turning with a marvellous grace and dignity, Hope went away, leaving her husband to the company of his reflections, which were not the pleasantest in the world at that moment.

Hugh Christie, however, fortunately for his peace of mind, possessed the power of dismissing all unpleasant things from his thoughts; and when, ten minutes later, he drove the mail phaeton from the door, with Brenda, smart and laughing, by his side, he had entirely forgotten the disagreeable sensation that Hope's quiet dignity had given him, nor did he devote a second thought to the girl whom he had sworn at the altar to love, protect, and cherish, and who sat crouched in her bedroom, her face buried in her hands, her heart riven in twain; the light of life darkened to her, as it seemed, for ever, and the iron of a great despair and sorrow eating into her very soul!

(To be continued next week.)

This story commenced in No. 2,049. Back numbers can be obtained through all News-agents.

What Decides a Woman's Looks?

An authority has stated that what really decides a woman's looks and determines whether she shall be attractive or otherwise, is her complexion; and to secure a good complexion one fundamental rule must be observed. Good health and pure blood must be sought and secured. It is a recognised fact that in a great measure the liver controls the complexion, and when this organ is out of order a slight yellowness of the skin gradually becomes apparent.

Bright eyes have been acknowledged for years to depend upon the digestion, but only of late has hygiene recognised the fact that on the digestion also rests the condition of the hair. The lesson to be learned is, therefore, keep the digestion vigorous, the blood pure, the liver in order, and the general health good, and bright eyes, a clear and attractive complexion, and glossy hair are bound to follow. Chas. Forde's Bile Beans for Biliousness will do all that can be done for the liver and digestive organs. Write for a free sample box to try them. You may have one sent by merely forwarding your full name and address, and a penny stamp to pay return postage, together with the name of this paper, to the Bile Bean Co.'s Central Distributing Depot, Greek Street, Leeds (York). All chemists will now supply them for one and three halfpence or two and nine pence box. You must, however, beware of imitations.

A Terrible Catastrophe.

She was the most popular girl in the seaside hotel, and when two of the others came into her room and found her dissolved in tears they proffered sympathy at once.

"Has your father sent for you?" cried the girl with her hair looped over her eyes.

"Charlie has not gone off on the train?" cried the girl with the pencilled brows, in a tragic tone.

"No—no—much worse."

"You surely never lost that lovely hat overboard while you were boating?"

"Or let Jennie get the strange young man seated next her at the table?"

"Oh, girls, it's much worse than anything; I think I'll go into a convent—everybody will be talking about it. Promise never to breathe it, and I'll tell you all about it."

"We never will."

"Well, you know that lovely new young man?"

"No, but I mean to."

"Oh, it's about him. Mame and I have been crazy to know him. His room is just under ours, and we heard him singing in a lovely baritone."

"Well, Fred knows him, and he'll introduce—"

"Never! It was this way; I was asking Fred about him and he told me that he wanted to know me; that he said those little baby curls about my forehead were lovely, so natural. Then we saw him coming, and Fred offered to present him at once."

"Of course, you agreed?"

"If I only had! But I told Fred that I must speak to one of the girls first; then I flew upstairs. When I got there I saw at once that Mame had had one of her tidying fits, for I couldn't find what I wanted. You see, my hair was a little out of curl."

"Of course."

"Just then I heard Mame coming and I said crossly: 'I wish you'd tell me where on earth you've put my curling irons.' There was no reply, so I repeated my query in a still crosser tone."

"Mame is so provoking."

"Listen: 'I—I think there must be some mistake,' said a rather faint, masculine voice. And, girls, there he was standing just inside the door."

"My goodness!"

"I just stamped my foot. 'There is a mistake!' I cried. 'You're in the wrong room, and I'll thank you to get out,' and I advanced, brush in hand. He fled, and I locked and double locked the door; then I sank on the floor in a heap and cried. I couldn't forgive him for making such a silly mistake. Suddenly something struck me as strange—"

"You surely hadn't—"

"I just had. In my haste I had missed a flight of stairs and I had driven the man out of his own room. Oh, I'll never get over it if I live to be a hundred."

QUIET WORK

One lesson, Nature, let me learn of thee,
One lesson which in every wind is blown,
One lesson of two duties kept at one,
Though the loud world proclaim their enmity,—

Of toil unsevered from tranquillity,
Of labour, that in lasting fruit outgrows,
Far noisier schemes, accomplished in repose,
Too great for haste, too high for rivalry.

Yes, while on earth a thousand discords ring,
Man's senseless uproar mingling with his toil,
Still do thy quiet ministers move on,
Their glorious task in silence perfecting;
Still working, blaming still our vain turmoil;
Labourers that shall not fail when man is gone.

ROSALIND'S VOW

CHAPTER XIX.

UP to this time Rosalind had not moved from her position in the arm-chair, and it had not struck her that there was anything dishonourable in listening to a conversation not intended for her ears. As Sir Kenneth spoke the last words she started up with white face and quivering lips, and, throwing a shawl over her shoulders, ran swiftly downstairs and out of the house, weighed down by a burden that, within the last quarter of an hour, had grown additionally hard to bear.

For some hours she wandered along the lonely seashore, unconscious of the dreary greyness of the afternoon, or the complaining moan of the incoming waves—unconscious of everything save the bitter words Sir Kenneth had spoken. His love was turned to hate. He regarded her as the author of all his misery, and her very name had become a horror to him!

There was nothing surprising in all this—nothing but what Rosalind might naturally have expected, and yet to hear him say it had been very terrible to her. The words had stabbed her like a poisoned dagger, and she could not recall them without a thrill of unalterable agony.

But they were the means of revealing to her a secret which came upon her with a sudden overwhelming consciousness. She loved Sir Kenneth—loved him as only such a soul as hers can love, with a depth of devotion which was as passionate as it was unfathomable.

How the love had grown—how long it had lain in her heart—she could not tell; but there it was, and—ah! irony of fate!—it had only woken to vivid, throbbing life at the moment when she learnt his was irrevocably gone!

Not until the grey autumnal evening had fallen did she return to the Cottage, and then it was with the fixed determination to leave it the very next day for ever. It seemed to her impossible now that she and Sir Kenneth could remain under the same roof any longer; and, if she could prevent it, he should never know that they had been so near each other during the anxious weeks of his illness.

Her arrangements were soon made. She had very little packing to do, and the most difficult part of her task was that of acquainting Mrs. Selwin and her daughter with her intended departure, and exacting from them a reiterated promise that her name should not be mentioned to Sir Kenneth. This promise they both gave, and it was with tears of affectionate regret that they wished her goodbye, for they had become exceedingly attached to her during her short stay at the Cottage.

Rosalind had decided on going to London, for her experience at M—, when she went to the registry office, had convinced her of the difficulty a small country town would offer to a governess attempting to obtain a situation, without the most unexceptional references. After all, there is no place like London for keeping oneself hidden from friends and enemies alike!

Thither she accordingly went early on the following morning; and Sir Kenneth, as he heard the door open and shut on her departure, had no idea that it closed on the woman whose finger his wedding ring still encircled!

Rosalind knew something of London—enough to make her avoid those parts of it where apartments were likely to be expensive, for her money had dwindled down to a very low ebb, and her only hope of adding to it was by work. She took one room somewhere in the Euston Road, and then, resolutely trying to forget the hopelessness and misery of her position, she devoted all her energies to the task of finding employment.

Oh! the weariness, the humiliation, the sickness of "hope deferred" of the following

weeks! The weather was miserable—grey November days, when the fog-demon enveloped everything in a thick veil of mirk, and the pavements were encrusted with a species of black grease, as uncomfortable to walk on as it was disagreeable to look upon. The contrast between the clean, bright atmosphere, the fresh, salt-flavoured breezes of Devonshire, with its windy downs and grand sea, and smoke-begrimed London, would have been great under the most favourable circumstances, but, in these dull November days, Rosalind actually sickened for a breath of pure air and a sight of the wind-ruffled sea.

Day after day she plodded wearily to the "Agency" where she had put down her name, and every morning she paid her penny for permission to read the advertisements in the newspapers. But no one seemed to want a governess. Cooks, housemaids, nurses, were all greatly in request; governesses alone were at a discount.

And during all this time her money was steadily diminishing, though she spent as little as she possibly could, and her "daily bread" was in such proportions as only just served to keep body and soul together.

At length she broke into her last shilling, and then, one by one, her little ornaments were sold, until her wedding-ring was the sole article of jewellery she had left.

It was very dreadful, very humiliating, to the proud girl who had had such implicit faith in her own resources, and had never dreamt they would not command at least enough money to keep her in respectability.

There was no one to whom she could apply for help, for the peculiar circumstances of her life had prevented her making friends, and her pride made an appeal to the Charitons as impossible as to Sir Kenneth himself.

Christmas drew near. The shops were all decked out in their gayest variety; carts full of ivy and holly made spots of brightness in the dingy streets, which were thronged with cabs, bearing holiday seeking people away to their several destinations.

Sometimes, when Rosalind was trudging home to her miserable, cold, little room, she would catch a glimpse through the windows of some happy fireside—a young mother bending lovingly over her first-born—a crowd of happy boys and girls, fresh from school, crowding round their parents' knee—a husband and wife sitting opposite each other, talking in the ruddy firelight—commonplace, every-day sort of pictures, certainly, but to the weary watcher full of the pathos of a lost happiness, suggestive of what "might have been," but never could be.

Little wonder that she grew pale and thin, while the great dark eyes gleamed like twin stars, too large for the face in which they were set.

Even her energy, indomitable as she had fancied it, drooped under the constant strain, and sometimes she caught herself wondering whether she was indeed the same girl who had gone down to Crowthorne Manor less than six months ago, in all the pride of her youth, and health, and beauty, determined to conquer, whatever difficulties might lie in her path, by sheer force of will!

One morning—it was the twenty-first of December—she turned out the contents of her shabby little purse, and found they amounted to exactly four shillings and sixpence halfpenny. Four shillings and sixpence halfpenny between her and starvation! For how all her ornaments were gone, and there was nothing left to sell or raise money upon.

How she envied Maraquita lying in her nameless grave by the side of the pool! She, at least, was at peace, even if the peace had been bought at the cost of a crime.

Many a time she had looked longingly at the river as it swept on its way to the distant

sea. In its broad bosom so many sorrows were drowned, so many aching hearts found rest, and there was nothing in her life to look forward to—no hope that the future would ever redeem the past.

But Rosalind was not a coward, and though death seemed sweet to her, she was the last woman in the world to seek it.

It must not be thought that in this struggle with poverty she had made no efforts beyond seeking for a position as a governess.

She had offered herself as a nurse, a parlour-maid, a seamstress, but all the offers had met with the same result.

As a matter of fact, her appearance was against her. She was too beautiful and well-bred to fill a menial position, and the fact that she was a lady was one impossible to be hidden.

People don't care to see a lovely and delicately-nurtured girl doing housework, or cleaning knives. There is something incongruous in it and something suspicious as well.

On this particular morning Rosalind first of all went to the "Agency" where the usual answer awaited her, and then looked at the daily papers.

There was one advertisement that seemed hopeful—a lady advertising for a young woman "of Christian principles, who would not object to make herself generally useful."

From the wording of the advertisement Rosalind fancied that the "principles" were a secondary consideration to the usefulness; but, anyhow, she determined to make a personal application, and some indefinite instinct told her it would be successful.

Unfortunately, the address given was a village in Essex, and to take a return ticket there and back would absorb her small remaining portion of money. Nevertheless, she determined to risk it, and accordingly went straight off to Liverpool Street, and an hour later found herself walking along the muddy road towards "The Towers," for such was the superb name of the residence of the lady who wished to combine Christianity and usefulness so impartially.

The Towers proved to be a pretentious and painfully new red brick house, standing a little way back from the road, and approached by a carriage sweep, backed by pigmy shrubs, all of which seemed either dead or dying.

There was not a tree on the place that had been planted more than twelve months, and the consequence was a general bareness, out of which the crude, red brick house rose with a startling effect of cold in winter, and warmth in summer.

Mrs. Barnes-Smith, the mistress of this imposing establishment, was a tall, thin, wasp-waisted woman, with sharp eyes, and a voice to match.

Rosalind's first impression of her was not an agreeable one.

"I have five children, and it would be your duty to instruct them from ten to twelve in the morning, and from two to five in the afternoon," she observed, after a few preliminary questions.

"I suppose you speak French?"

"Yes."

"And German?"

"Yes."

"And you play and sing well?"

"Moderately well," replied Rosalind; whereupon Mrs. Barnes-Smith requested her to "give her a song," explaining at the same time that the grand piano was a new one, and had cost a hundred guineas. She said this in a tone of voice that intimated Rosalind must consider herself a favoured person to be allowed to play on such a superior instrument.

"Fairly satisfactory I fairly!" she said, with a wave of her hand, as the girl returned to her seat. "Of course, I have heard better playing, but one cannot expect everything in this vale of tears!"

She shook her head solemnly, and remained silent for a moment.

"In the morning, before you begin the chil-

dren's lessons, I should require you to dust the drawing-room; and you would also be expected to see to their dinner in the middle of the day. In the evening you would assist me to dress when I was going out, and after that you would do the plain sewing, and bath the children before putting them to bed. Do you think you could do all this satisfactorily?"

"I would try," responded poor Rosalind, and it was significant of the low ebb of her fortunes that she should make so meek a reply.

She was clear-sighted enough to see that Mrs. Barnes-Smith would get as much as possible out of her dependants; that she was, in other words, a perfect slave-driver; but, even with this knowledge, Rosalind determined to take the situation if she could get it.

"Now about salary," observed the lady, briskly. "As you see, I keep a large establishment, and have a great many expenses, besides many calls on my charity, so that I really can't afford what would be called a high salary. I gave my last 'help' ten pounds a year."

Ten pounds! The blood flew to Rosalind's face. She had had fifty guineas a year at Crowthorne, and very little to do for it.

"Ten pounds is not much," she faltered.

"But you must think of the advantages that accompany it," was the reply. "You will have a home such as you have probably never lived in before; and you will be surrounded by persons of refinement and cultivation. Indeed, I don't see what more you can possibly expect!"

Mrs. Barnes-Smith had noted at a glance the extreme simplicity of Rosalind's attire, and had put her own interpretation upon it. Begging, she knew, could not afford to be choosers, and this reflection had encouraged her to offer terms so pitiful that it was almost incompatible with self-respect to accept them.

Nevertheless, Rosalind finally agreed to them, and then presented certain written testimonials from the school in which she had taught before her marriage.

"Your name is Grant, then—Miss Grant," said Mrs. Barnes-Smith, glancing up from the papers, and Rosalind simply bowed acquiescence, for she had so far departed from her original plan as to resume her maiden name.

"Well," added the lady, who, in the face of having made her own terms, was not inclined to be hypocritical regarding credentials, "then we'll consider it settled that you come for a month on trial. This is Tuesday. Can you come next Thursday?"

Rosalind immediately acquiesced, and rose to take leave. Before she could reach the door it was opened from the outside, and two gentlemen came in. The one was a stranger to the girl, but the other she at once recognised.

It was Captain Marchant.

CHAPTER XX.

"How do you do, Miss Grant—I beg your pardon—Lady Hawtrey?" said the officer, after a moment's surprised pause. "It is some time since I had the pleasure of seeing you last."

Rosalind's face grew first crimson and then deadly pale. Mechanically she murmured some confused answer to his greeting, inwardly breathing a prayer that the hostess had not heard what he said. But that this was not the case was proved a moment after by Mrs. Barnes-Smith's rasping voice—

"So you are a friend of this lady's, Captain Marchant?"

"I had the honour of her acquaintance some time ago," returned the officer, with a bow, flashing at the same instant a rapid glance from one woman to the other, and conscious of an approaching storm.

By this time Mrs. Barnes-Smith had left her seat and advanced to the group at the door, her head held well aloft, her eyes full of curiosity and suspicion.

"Did I hear you say something about 'mar-

riage.' Were you referring to this lady's marriage?"

Marchant looked at Rosalind for instructions; but her eyes were bent on the floor, her hands were clasped tightly together in an agony of self-abasement.

The officer would have said "no" just as willingly as "yes" to his hostess's question if he could have been sure that Rosalind wished it; but not knowing how the lady lay, he deemed it best to be on the safe side and tell the truth, since Lady Hawtrey had given no hint that a lie would be desirable.

"Yes," he said, to Mrs. Barnes-Smith. "I was referring to this lady's marriage. I have not seen her since the ceremony took place."

The mistress of the house turned angrily on Rosalind.

"How was it you did not tell me you were married? Why did you attempt to pass yourself off on me as a single woman?" she demanded, with shrill disgust. "And to think that I engaged you to come near my innocent children and be in the same house with me! What a shameless creature you must be to deceive me like this! But, thank heaven, I have learned your true character in time! Leave this house, and you may thank your luck that I don't give you in charge for trying to obtain money under false pretences!"

She had worked herself up into a passion of vulgar rage that wanted to vent itself in ugly words. Only the presence of Captain Marchant restrained her from pouring forth a further torrent of vindictive abuse on poor Rosalind's devoted head. The girl made no reply, only cast one glance of utter scorn on the angry woman, and, drawing her veil over her face, passed out of the house without one backward look.

Perhaps it may be wondered why Mrs. Barnes-Smith should have allowed her temper to get the better of her in this manner, but the explanation is very simple.

The gentleman who had entered with Marchant was her second husband, who was considerably younger than herself, and whom she had recently married.

She had seen with what admiration his eyes had fastened on Rosalind's face, and then, for the first time, she herself had been struck with its loveliness, and wondered at her own foolishness in engaging a girl who, by virtue of her pretty face, would be quite certain to divert from Mrs. Barnes-Smith the masculine admiration that she looked upon as her own exclusive right.

Hence, her first thought was to remedy the indiscretion into which the prospect of getting good services for small pay had so nearly betrayed her, and this Marchant's disclosure had enabled her to do.

As Rosalind went out the officer, with a hasty word of excuse, followed her, and overtook her just as she reached the gate of the Towers.

"I am afraid I have been indiscreet in some way," he said, regretfully. "I need hardly tell you that I am very sorry to have been the means of causing you annoyance!"

"It was not your fault," she returned, in dull, apathetic tones that sounded to the listener something like despair. "You only told the truth!"

"But perhaps it would have been more politic to keep silence altogether?"

She shook her head and walked on, looking neither to the right nor left, her lips set in a rigid line, her eyes fixed and despairing.

Although she knew Marchant must have heard of her marriage through the Charltons, she felt too utterly spiritless even to ask him how Edith was, and when he had seen her last.

Her own acquaintance with Captain Marchant had commenced some time before she went to Crowthorne.

A cousin of his had been at the school where Rosalind taught, and Rosalind had once gone home with her for the holidays. This girl had married a year or so ago, and was now in India.

But Fulke Marchant's knowledge of the girl was not limited to the short time during which they had been personally acquainted. He knew more of her family and friends than she had ever guessed, and even at this moment he was puzzled as to whether he should follow her to her destination, and thus find out where she was hiding herself, or return to the Towers and complete the business that had brought him hither.

Prudence counselled the latter alternative, for, truth to tell, this same business was somewhat important, being nothing more nor less than a loan which he was anxious to extract from Mr. Barnes-Smith—or rather, his better half, for it was she who held the purse-strings.

His abrupt departure with the despised governess was not likely to be in his favour, and so, after a rapid review of the situation, Captain Marchant decided to return to the Towers, and when he had completed his business it was his intention to try and overtake Rosalind on her way to the station.

She saw him depart with the same indifference as she had seen him follow her. Her money and resources were both exhausted, and a leaden sort of apathy had taken possession of her, numbing all her faculties into a sort of lethargy.

She wondered what would be Sir Kenneth's sensations could he see her at this moment—broken in spirit, penniless, almost starving!

After she had gone a little distance she turned off from the high road leading to the station into a lane, that seemed to promise more solitude.

She knew the train by which she had arranged to return to London did not start for another three-quarters of an hour, and it would be better to spend the interval walking rather than in the stuffy little waiting-room, with perhaps half-a-dozen other people who were also waiting for trains.

The lane she was now in was lonely, and seemed to be little used. She did not meet a soul on her way, but at some little distance she saw a white house standing back from the pathway, and this she unconsciously made her goal, determining to turn back when she had reached it.

What she thought of as she went along it would be difficult to put in words, for her mind was a chaos, from which only the one fact of her helplessness and hopelessness stood out with any distinctness.

She felt now that the end had come. She knew not what to do or which way to turn; and the only thing that remained to her was her pride, which would not permit her to make known her pitiful condition to anyone who had the power of helping her.

Before she reached the house that was to be the signal for her return a sudden giddy faintness assailed her, and she staggered blindly forward, then fell headlong on the hard, frosty road—unconscious of her sorrows, and in a dead faint.

Thus she was found some five minutes later by a young man who had come from the white house, and who was walking leisurely along, wrapped in profound meditation. The sight of that prone figure made him hasten his pace, but it was with an expression of disgust.

"A drunken woman at this time of the morning! What a blot upon Nature!"

One glance at the pale, rigid face told him his mistake, and he started violently with a muttered exclamation.

"Rosalind Grant—Lady Hawtrey! What, in the name of all that is wonderful, can bring her here—and in this condition?"

He wasted no time in useless wonderings, but produced from his pocket a silver flask containing brandy. A little of this he contrived to pour between the set, white lips, and presently his efforts were rewarded, for Rosalind breathed a long, deep sigh, and opened her dark eyes on the man who had come to her aid.

"Don't you know me?" he said, gently.

"It is Claud Stuart. Let me help you to rise."

He did so, but she was so weak and helpless that she could not stand without assistance, and he supported her with his arm. She had eaten nothing all that day, and she was as much exhausted physically as mentally.

"Are you staying near here?" asked Claud, both surprised and bewildered at her manner.

"No. I am living in London. I came from Liverpool Street this morning, and I intended going back by the mid-day train."

"But you are far too unwell to think of travelling!"

A sudden flood of tears welled up to her eyes, and she was too weak to prevent their falling.

Claud looked away so as not to embarrass her.

"Shall I telegraph to your—husband?" he was going to say, but substituted "friends" instead.

"I have no friends," she returned, pathetically. "I am living alone."

Claud was too delicate to ask her how it was she and her husband were separated so soon after their marriage, but he still supported her with his arm, and was leading her in the direction of the white house.

"I live there," he said, pointing to it. "Will you come in and rest for awhile? You will be better after you have had a glass of wine and a biscuit."

She accepted the offer gratefully; then an idea struck her, and she said—

"I did not know you had left the Cedars." A deep crimson flushed his face, then died away, leaving it deadly pale.

"Yes," he answered, with some constraint. "I left the Cedars two or three months ago."

He did not add more, and Rosalind asked no further questions—indeed, neither spoke until they had reached the house, the door of which was opened to them by the man who had been Claud's valet at the Cedars.

The interior of this house presented a very great contrast to the inside of the Cedars, where costly furniture and gorgeous Eastern rugs and fabrics had given the idea of unlimited wealth. Here the furniture was extremely simple, even homely in its character. As a matter of fact, Claud had taken the house as it stood and the furniture at a valuation.

Rosalind was revived by the wine and biscuit, and after she had eaten a faint tinge of colour came back to her lips, and she began to look more like her old self.

"I am better now," she said, with a smile that Claud thought very pitiful. "Tell me how Edith and the Squire are?"

The question was not a happy one, and seemed to cause the young man both pain and embarrassment.

"I don't know," he returned. "I have neither seen nor heard of them since I left the Cedars."

CHAPTER XXI.

Claud's demeanour forbade Rosalind asking any more questions regarding the Charltons; and, having no further excuse for remaining, she rose slowly and wistfully, and held out her hand.

"Good-bye, Mr. Stuart! I thank you very much for your kindness to me."

But Claud seemed to hesitate about letting her go.

"You are quite unfit to travel," he said. Then he added, in a slower and more embarrassed manner, "I don't want to intrude upon your private affairs, but I fear you are in trouble of some kind. It is in my power to help you in any way, I shall be only too pleased to do it."

Rosalind's lips quivered.

"I am in trouble," she said, in a low voice.

There was a pause for a few minutes.

"I do not ask your confidence," went on Claud, who—if only for the sake of Edith, who had loved her—would have been glad to help Rosalind.

"I, of all people, should understand that there are circumstances where it is impossible to be frank and open"—he said this with some bitterness. "The battle of life is harder for a woman than for a man, and she has less strength to bear the brunt of it. Poor women! I often wonder whether the law of compensation holds good in their case!"

Meanwhile, Rosalind had come to a rapid conclusion. She had always liked and trusted Claud, and she preferred to be under an obligation to him than to anyone else she knew. She turned to him impulsively.

"You are very good, and though I cannot tell you the whole of my story, I will tell you this much. I am very poor, and I know not which way to turn in order to get a living. Can you recommend me to a situation? I am willing to work at anything, and for very little salary."

This was a strange announcement for the wife of one of the richest baronets in England to make. Claud could hardly believe she was in her right senses.

"But Sir Kenneth—" he began, when she quickly interrupted him, a burning crimson dyeing her cheek.

"Sir Kenneth and I have separated. Pray do not ask me why. I have relinquished the position of his wife, and I desire to resume my maiden name. It is the anomaly of my position that has made it so hard for me to obtain employment. I tell you this, and I think I know you too well not to be sure there is no danger of your betraying it."

Claud bowed, and did not speak for a few moments. Amazed as he was, he was not incredulous, for life had taught him many strange lessons, and amongst them the faculty of recognising distress when he saw it.

When he spoke again, it was in the quick tones of one who had come to a sudden resolution.

"It is not in my power to recommend you to a situation, Miss Grant," he said, dropping naturally into her more familiar maiden name, "for the sufficient reason that I myself am hiding from my friends under a name that does not belong to me. You are surprised? Have you not lived in the world long enough to know that nothing is certain save the unexpected? Well, as I said before, I am not in a position to recommend you to my own friends, but I can offer you a home in my own household, and you can name your own terms. Your duties will be those of attending to a sick lady."

"Your mother?"

Claud did not immediately reply. He seemed to be weighing the pros and cons of the case.

"If you decide on accepting my offer, I shall be forced to take you into my confidence, but let me hear your decision first."

"I accept your offer."

"Mind, the duties and responsibilities will not be light. Indeed, I had better tell you, that I was about engaging the services of a professional nurse, and should have done so if I had not met you."

"I shall not shrink either the duties or their responsibility," answered Rosalind, in a tone of calm assurance.

Claud looked at her earnestly. He knew she was a woman of strong will and unflagging energy. More than that, he believed her to be staunch and true as steel—one who could be trusted to the last extremity. Her word, once given, would be as sacred to her as an oath.

It was necessary to take some one into his confidence—circumstances compelled it, and he could hardly have hoped to find a person more suitable if he had searched the world over.

"Then I will trust you. The lady who at the Cedars was called my mother is not my mother—is, in point of fact, only connected with me by the fact of being my cousin's wife, but a tie greater than that of blood binds us together. I was the means of inflicting an

awful injury upon her; and in reparation for it I vowed my whole life to her service—and that vow I will keep, so help me Heaven!"

He raised his hand solemnly as he spoke, then drew his chair a little nearer to that of his companion, and went on in a carefully lowered tone—

"I will tell you in what way I injured her. Some three years ago I was on a visit to her and her husband, and my cousin and I quarrelled. The quarrel began in my remonstrating with him on his treatment of his wife; and unfortunately it took place in a long gallery where he and I had been practising with pistols. My passion got the better of me, and in a perfect access of rage I fired the pistol that I held in my hand straight at my cousin; but at that very moment his wife rushed between us. He was saved from the slightest injury, but she was blinded by the charge."

Claud stopped a moment and looked away, so that Rosalind should not see the emotion he found it impossible to conceal.

"I need not tell you of my remorse. Oculists from London and Berlin were consulted, but they could do no good; and the poor girl found herself condemned to perpetual darkness through my sin. I verily believed that she suffered infinitely less than I did at that dreadful time. If by the sacrifice of my life I could have given her back her sight, Heaven knows how willingly I would have done it. But all I could do was to promise to be her friend—her brother, and to protect her as long as she lived."

"I wished to take up my abode near her, but her husband either was, or pretended to be, jealous; and she implored me to carry out my original design and go to Italy, where I was to study art."

"In obedience to her request I went, and she promised to recall me if it were necessary. In course of time I received the summons, and then I found she was indeed in a terrible strait. I must explain to you that she had a little nephew under her guardianship. He was an orphan and heir to a very large fortune, which, in case of his death, passed to her. Well, this child had been poisoned by her hand."

"He was ill, and she had been in the habit of giving him his medicine, as he would take it from no hand but hers."

"In the night someone changed the medicine bottles—put carbolic acid in the place of the proper draught, and put it in a similar bottle. Of this my poor friend was quite sure, but it could not be proved; and she, poor thing, was believed to have committed a crime in order to gain possession of the dead boy's fortune, which, of course, came to her."

"She was now a very rich woman, and her husband, who was extravagant and in debt, tried to take advantage of her wealth; but she resisted, for she believed that he was the murderer of her brother's son; and she resolved that, if she could prevent it, not one farthing of the money for which he had sinned should pass into his hands."

"It was then that the villainy of her husband's character was fully revealed. By some means he procured a doctor who certified that his wife was insane, and he thereupon kept her a prisoner in her apartments, threatening, unless she complied with his demands, to have her shut up in a lunatic asylum."

"By means of her old nurse she contrived to get a letter posted to me, and I at once left Italy and returned to England."

"I wanted to openly accuse my cousin of what he had done, but his wife would not consent to it. She shrank from the shame of publicity; and, besides this, she feared her husband would, in spite of whatever he might do, still contrive to outwit us."

"Her own desire was to escape from him; and so, after much planning, and with great difficulty, I managed to effect her escape; and then, in disguise, I took her to the Cedars, where she passed as my mother."

"She had brought with her nearly all her

securities, and had been followed by her former nurse, who was honest and devoted to her interests.

"Unfortunately, this woman (who is still at the Cedars) has been taken ill, otherwise she would be with us now; consequently, our household consists solely of my valet, Ambrose, who is as true as steel.

"Lately I have had some hopes that poor Nona might recover her sight. She says that she can now distinguish between light and darkness, and can also see anything that glitters or shines.

"Of course, I have consulted an oculist in London, and he has prescribed a course of treatment which requires the aid of a nurse to carry out properly. It is the duties of this nurse that I wish you to undertake."

Rosalind had listened in silence to this strange history. Once she had started, and seemed on the point of interrupting him, but she restrained herself, and remained quietly attentive till he had finished. All that Mrs. Selwin had told her concerning Pierce Vansittart and his wife came back to her memory, and enabled her to fit in the missing links, and thus make the chain complete.

"I am glad you have seen fit to put this confidence in me," she said, as he ceased speaking. "I need hardly say that not a word of what you have told me shall ever pass my lips. You have enlisted my sympathies, too, and I will try my very best to be of service to Mrs. Vansittart."

"What!" cried Claud, in absolute and startled amaze. "How do you know her name?"

Then it was Rosalind's turn to explain, but she merely said that, residing in the neighborhood of Weir Castle, she had heard sufficient local gossip to be able to connect it with what Mr. Stuart had told her, and Claud once more breathed freely, and then eagerly asked her whether Mr. Vansittart had ever mentioned his wife to her.

"No," she replied, but she did not add that Mr. Vansittart's general conduct had been such as to declare that he utterly ignored the fact of having a wife at all.

"I am sure," went on Claud—to whom it was naturally an immense relief to be able to speak with even a degree of openness of his troubles—"I am sure that Pierce Vansittart has not the remotest idea that his wife is still in England, or he would not rest a moment until he had found her. I was enabled to throw him off our track by the manoeuvre of making him suppose we had started for New York, and now I hear that he has spies all over that city, and that even the police have been engaged to find us out."

"Then," said Rosalind, "you are of opinion that he is aware you are his wife's companion?"

"Yes, I am morally sure of it, only it suits his purpose to ignore this certainty, in order to throw additional discredit on poor Nona. If only we can restore her eyesight I shall not fear him and his power so much, for then she will be less helpless. At present, without me, she would be utterly at his mercy. You must not think," he added, while his handsome face clouded over, "that I imperilled her good name without due cause. If I had thought there was any other way of saving her from her husband's brutality, I should never have taken her away with me. But there was no alternative, for her blindness prevented her helping herself. It was a choice of two evils, and I chose the lesser. Fortunately, both she and I are rich, and if sight again becomes necessary, we shall not lack the means of going whithersoever Nona may think safest."

"I wonder you did not leave England?"

Claud smiled slightly. "Shall I tell you the reason we did not? It was because it seemed the easiest and most natural thing to do; and, by not doing it, we diverted Pierce Vansittart's suspicions from our real place of refuge."

"But why, if I may ask, did you leave the

Cedars? Surely that was as safe a retreat as you could find?"

"So I thought when I went there first. But secluded as it is we were discovered, and forced to leave it."

He did not tell her in what way this discovery came about, nor by whom it was wrought. The subject was too full of pain for him to care to revert to it. Edith's image was still fresh in his heart, and the bitterest part of his trouble was that he had lost her.

Still, he had never swerved from the vow he made when, through his hand, blindness fell on Pierce Vansittart's wife. Nothing that he could do would repair the injury inflicted, and it had seemed a small thing to attempt reparation by dedicating his whole life to her service. No devotee ever held the object of his prayers more sacred than Claud did Nona. No poet ever surrounded an ideal vision with a halo of greater veneration. His devotion to her was all the purer because it was not obscured by a lover's passion. He was, at the same time, something more and less than a brother.

It was for this reason that he had striven so hard to conquer his love for Edith. He knew that if he married it would be quite impossible to make Nona his first thought, and less than this would be to wrong her and himself. As we have seen, passion overcame prudence, and he confessed his affection to Edith. But when the time came that he had to choose between her and betraying Nona's secret, he, without hesitation, accepted the alternative, which banished him from his love.

Nona never knew that he and Edith were more than friends. He had kept the truth carefully concealed from her, seeing that the knowledge would only increase her regret, and that no ultimate good could come of it. It is probable that if she had been aware of the sacrifice Claud was making on her behalf, she might have refused to accept it—might even have insisted on his leaving her to fight her battle alone.

"Come!" said the young man, rising. "I will take you to Nona, and make you acquainted with her."

Rosalind could not help feeling a little excited as she followed him.

(To be continued next week.)

(This story commenced in No. 2051. Back numbers can be obtained through all News-agents.)

THE EYES

People often fail to strengthen their vision by applying lotions and ointments, simply because it may happen that the particular weakness of the eye from which they are suffering comes from bodily ill-health. If, however, the body is in perfect health, and there is no doubt that the eyes are locally affected, they should be taken great care of, and never wearied with reading or working. Frequent bathing with water is a safe and beneficial thing; rose-water, cold tea, and milk-and-water are all good for weak or smarting eyes. Nothing is more invigorating than plunging the face, night and morning, eyes open, into a basin of fresh cold water. The eyebrows should be combed and brushed every day, and trained into a perfect shape by gentle massage with coconut or castor oil, which helps to darken as well as strengthen them. A safe remedy to promote the growth of the brows and lashes is: Olive oil, half an ounce; oil of nutmeg, twelve drops; oil of rosemary, twelve drops; tincture of cantharides, three drachms. Coconut oil is used upon lashes to make them look lustrous and dark.

"Love," said the poet, "is a mystic influence; it is a message and a response, voluble in a flash of thought; it conquers time and distance, and its exchange requires no medium for transmission." "That's not love," said the practical man. "You're talking about wireless telegraphy now."

DEPRECIATION

A curious manipulation of the strange windings of the human mind is the spirit of depreciation from which few of us are wholly free. One cannot help thinking that it would be much pleasanter and nicer, as well as much juster, to "let oneself go" in hearty appreciation; and that is the course which you would naturally expect people to choose. But they do not. Even people who in a general way are kind-hearted and even generous—who love their fellows, and who love the truth—are unable to resist the subtle fascination of this spirit of depreciation. It may not be a permanent attitude of the mind. It is often the reaction from undue and lavish praise; often, too, it springs up within us when we are out of sorts or out of temper. None the less, it is to be guarded against, for, if the inclination to indulge in it is not repelled, the habit of depreciation may become confirmed and ingrained, and it is injurious to character. Moreover, it is generally at variance with truth and justice. Everybody has experienced it; everybody knows how it arises. We have a friend, let us say, rather given to gushing. In an unlucky hour we meet our friend. He or she begins to gush over some acquaintance, or some new friend or new possession, or about things in general. Instantly the spirit of antagonism is aroused within us. A protest rises in our breast and depreciatory words slip out. We know that the persons or things over which our friend is gushing are admirable and really worthy of all praise; but the gush has got on our nerves, and almost before we are aware of it the unjust depreciation has fallen from our lips and is beyond recall. But it does not always need the gushing of an injudicious friend to stir up the spirit of depreciation. There are times when it asserts itself without any provocation and works its will from no apparent cause. Sometimes we are in a captious mood, and, out of sheer perversity, we stem with a dam of depreciation the tide of well deserved praise. Nay, even when there has been no commendation, depreciation insinuates itself into our minds, and we let it loose in words. There has been absolutely no reason for it. In our heart of hearts we agree with what is being said, but that strange perverseness in us prompts the unjust phrase. It is our best friend perhaps with whom we are in converse. A name crops up—the name of a third person valued by our friend. We are well acquainted with the fact, yet we cannot—or, rather, will not—refrain from a slighting comment. It will certainly hurt our friend, yet we make the comment, unnecessary though it is, unjust though it is. It may not be a small jealousy that prompts it, but it undoubtedly looks very much like it. We have perhaps the excuse that we have been upset or irritated; the feeling is strong upon us that we must punish some one, and we dart out our sting at the first person we encounter, and so wound our friend. But as likely as not the thing has been wilful and quite gratuitous. Presently we shall find ourselves sinking into habitual depreciation—unable to appreciate anything. We may not always give expression to it, but our first thought concerning everyone we meet and everything we see will belittle them. That surely is a deplorable frame of mind! There are times when the spirit of depreciation has its uses, it may be the means of reducing persons or events to their right proportions. But, if it has its value, it has its danger, which lies in suffering it to become a habit. It is among the smaller faults that mar some natures otherwise fine and wholesome. Good and grateful it is to give praise where it is due and to give it without stint. Pleasant it is to be able to look upon a man and to see his good points first, to discover a thing's merits before its defects. And to be generous as well as just is not a bad rule! Certainly we shall be happier if we follow it than if it is our plan to be ungenerous and unjust as well. It is a good thing to pause and think before the depreciatory words have been uttered and are irrevocable.

Susan's Lucky Shot

[SHORT STORY.]

IT was a very pretty prospect that confronted Miss Susan Galton Brown. The scattering white homes among the trees in the valley, the blue hills beyond with their fringes of pine trees, the clear sky that was such a novelty to the girl from the great manufacturing town—it was all bright and fresh and so delightfully clean. Miss Susan Galton Brown looked back on the peaceful prospect for a lingering moment or two and then pressed ahead up the mountain road.

She certainly was an unusual figure for that quiet neighbourhood. Attired in a close-fitting suit of gray with a short walking skirt and a wire-brimmed gray felt hat that concealed her beautiful hair, she might, at a distance, save for the skirt, have been taken for an extremely handsome boy. Her gait would have carried out the impression, there was such an unconstrained swing to it. But her high boots were not a boy's boots, and her hands were neatly gloved. Miss Susan Galton Brown carried something under her arm. It was a light magazine rifle, the gift of an adoring father. For she could shoot and fish and swim and run, and do it all in a way that met that adoring father's critical approval. She had minor talents, of course—an education rounded off in a finishing school, a pleasing smattering of music, taste for art that was only second to her taste for nature. But all these were quite dwarfed in her daddy's opinion by those manly attributes that he so assiduously cultivated. She was his companion on long hunting and fishing trips, and an ideal companion at that.

It is needless to say that quiet Elmwood looked upon this accomplished young woman with a very doubtful expression. She was a little too advanced—that was the term they used—for Elmwood's old-fashioned ideas of maidenly modesty. The mothers of Elmwood held her up as an example of the baneful coming woman, and the girls of Elmwood thought her dreadfully bold—and secretly envied her. As for the men—well, there were but few of them in Elmwood whose opinion was worth recording, and of these a mere handful dared to express an honest opinion in the face of the universal feminine condemnation. Of these independent souls it must be admitted that Mr. John Cortwright stood first and foremost.

If Miss Susan Galton Brown knew of the unfavourable light in which her short skirt and her Teddy hat had placed her—and there is no doubt she did—the matter failed to worry her in the least. She had come down to Elmwood to stay a month with her maiden aunt—her dead mother's only sister—who lived in the big white mansion on Main Street, just beyond the Baptist meeting house. It was this fond aunt who had invited Jack Cortwright to call, and although this was a particular youth, with high ideals of womanhood, he called again and again and again. What was strange about it, too, was that Jack hailed from the East, and from Puritan surroundings at that. Yet with all this discreet bringings up he certainly was fascinated with the wild Western boyden.

They all said that Jack Cortwright was a rising young man. Some capitalists had sent him—fresh from college—to the Western town to look after their interests in certain undeveloped coal-mining property that lay a few miles north of Elmwood. And Jack had taken off his coat, metaphorically, and gone to work to develop it. There was plenty of capital behind him, and he had built a railway branch to the mine, and started a bank in Elmwood, of which he was temporary cashier, and stirred the little town into making certain improvements that had long been discussed. In short, Jack Cortwright was recognised even by those who didn't approve of his revolutionary tactics to be the liveliest factor of progress the sleepy little hamlet had ever known.

Miss Susan Galton Brown had poor luck that bright October afternoon. She didn't rouse a solitary rabbit. But, after all, it was the tramp she was after rather than the game. Still, she must have a shot at something. So she pinned a brilliant lead to a tree trunk, and at twenty paces split it at the first trial.

The sun was still high above the hill when she started to return to her aunt's. As she went down the old State road a sudden clattering caused her to turn her head. Three men, mounted on powerful horses, came trotting down the slope. Susan stepped aside to let them pass, and one of the horses, catching sight of her, suddenly sprang aside and almost unseated his rider. Susan looked up anxiously, and saw to her astonishment that the man's heavy beard was twisted very much to one side. But he quickly regained his seat with an oath, and, striking the horse, clattered after his companions. Susan wondered why the man was disguised, and dimly fancied that the three rough-looking strangers were up to some mischief. But she was thinking of Jack the next moment, and the strange incident was shelved.

A few moments of brisk walking brought her to the brow of the hill where the road turned sharply and ran at an oblique angle along the side of the deep descent. Susan seated herself on a log and looked down into the village, which lay, as it were, at her very feet. She traced the one long street of the hamlet, which was but a continuation of the highway, and followed its dusty line past her aunt's trim home, and the little park with its soldiers' monument, and the town hall, and then along to the bank—Jack's bank—and there her gaze rested.

Miss Susan's eyes were good ones, and the air was very clear. She saw a horseman sitting in his saddle at the bank door. He was holding the bridle of two riderless horses. Even as she noted this the two riders rushed from the building and leaped into their saddles. There were puffs of white smoke and sharp detonations. Susan could see people running in wild confusion. Then the three riders started at a sharp canter up the road. Every dozen yards or so one would turn in his saddle and fire down the roadway.

Susan knew what this strange scene meant. It was a daylight bank robbery, one of the series that had terrorised all the countryside during the past summer. The three robbers were retreating with their plunder. What had happened in the bank? Why was Jack not pursuing them? She suddenly turned sick and cold.

Then an indescribable impulse seized her. She let herself over the edge of the bank and began a mad scramble down the steep declivity. She meant to intercept the ruffians. She slid, she stumbled, once she fell, but she never let go her hold on her precious rifle. And then, as the earth suddenly seemed falling away from her, she reached the level ground in a confused heap. But she got up on her feet in a moment. The highway was directly before her. The robbers were cantering by. The man in the rear was the man with the beard, and he had a coarse bag slung across the saddle before him. He was directly opposite Susan as she plunged down to the edge of the roadway. He must have taken her for an enemy, for his glittering revolver flew up and he fired in her direction quite at random. Susan felt a sudden twitch at her broad-brimmed hat, and quickly dropped behind some bushes that lined the roadway. The barrel of her rifle rose. The robber was rapidly increasing the distance between them. Could she shoot this man in cold blood? She had him covered. A moment more and it might be too late. She thought of Jack and fired.

The horse of the fleeing man suddenly leaped to one side and flung its rider heavily to the earth. As he went down he dragged the bag of plunder with him. The riderless horse galloped after his companions.

Then Susan Galton Brown sprang into the

roadway and fired five shots in rapid succession after the two horsemen. She did not aim to hit them, but rather to frighten them away. They hesitated a moment and then dashed madly ahead, the riderless horse galloping in the rear.

Susan ran forward to the prostrate man. He was unconscious. She stooped over him for a moment, and then drew away the coarse bag. As she suspected, it was half filled with notes and gold. She shuddered as she looked at the livid face of the ruffian and then at the blood that was slowly saturating his coat sleeve. She began to feel a little faint.

She was aroused by the sound of wheels and the shouting of a man. A light phaeton was coming toward her. In a moment she recognised the driver as the local livery stable proprietor. He leaped out beside her.

"Nailed him, didn't you?" he shouted, in a paroxysm of excitement. "I was just ready to drive out of my stable when they pelted by. As I got into the roadway I saw you blazin' away. Kill him?"

"No," said Susan, "he is stunned by the fall from his horse. I only aimed to break his shoulder."

"You done it all right," cried the livery man. "By George!" he shrieked, "it's Jim Bascom himself!"

Susan felt her head going around.

"Mr. Tompkins," she said, "will you kindly drive me to the bank as quickly as you can?"

"Yes, ma'am, I will," he replied, with great heartiness. "You've got the stuff there have you? Jump in."

And a moment later they were speeding toward the bank. They had not gone twenty yards when they met the first group of hastily armed men who were on the trail of the robbers.

"You'll find Jim Bascom lyin' up there," shouted the liveryman. "She shot him an' we've got the bank stuff all here!" And he touched his horse again. And the next group heard the same story, and the next, and the next. And they all turned and stared after blushing Susan Brown.

And then they were at the bank. There was a little crowd about the door. But they quickly made way for Susan, and the liveryman, and the precious bag.

And there was Jack sitting up in a big chair, and somebody was bathing his head, and he was blinking queerly like a man slowly waking up. But he suddenly seemed to regain his faculties when Susan Brown, forgetful of all the curious eyes about her, suddenly dropped on her knees beside him and put up her loving arms and cried:—

"Oh, Jack!"

"Why, Susan, dear!" murmured Jack. "There, there, don't worry. I'm just a little dazed. One of them hit me over the head with something from behind and stunned me. I'm almost all right again."

"Oh, Jack," moaned Susan Brown, "I-I thought they might have killed you, and—and I shot the man, and—and got the money back—oh, oh, oh!" And here poor Susan quite broke down, and putting her face against Jack's coat, sobbed convulsively. And Mr. Tompkins told what he knew, and then the astonished and delighted Jack turned the recovered treasure over to his assistant, who had been temporarily absent at the time of the attack, and, borrowing the happy Mr. Tompkins's phaeton, drove Susan to her aunt's.

"Oh, Jack," she murmured on the way, "it was unwomanly and so cold-blooded!"

"I'm afraid it was, my dear," said Jack, in a painfully solemn voice; "but as it saved the bank in which I am intimately interested thirty-seven thousand dollars in cold cash, and at the same time appears to have broken up the most desperate gang of thieves the state has ever known, I fear I must condone the fault. But you will promise not to do it again, won't you, dear?"

Susan promised.

Facetiæ

WHEN a man discovers his neighbour devoid of virtues never possessed by himself he is shocked.

AN old proverb says that "care will kill a cat." You may consign to us immediately a few tons of care and dump it into the backyard.

"WHAT would you do, John, if I got up in the middle of the night, as some enthusiasts do, to play the violin?" "I would get up and play the hose."

JUDGE DUFFY (to female witness): "What is your age, madame?" Witness (hesitatingly): "I have seen sixteen summers." Judge Duffy: "How many years were you blind?"

It is not that big men prefer little women, but that little women prefer big men, and it is the experience of the world-wise that what a woman wants and starts out to get she generally captures.

SHE: "I am afraid that bell ringing means another caller." He (imploringly): "You know there is such a thing as your not being at home." She: "Yes; and there is such a thing as my being engaged."

"I HEAR Bronson sang 'Rocked in the Cradle of the Deep' at the concert." "Yes." "Did he do it well?" "He did indeed. It was so vivid that five people left the hall overcome with sea-sickness."

PROF. POTTERBY: "Can you give any example of Spartan simplicity, Mr. Jenkins?" Jenkins: "About the simplest act I can think of just now was their staying at that pass until the whole batch were killed."

"WHAT are you crying about, my little man?" "Jimmy O'Brien licked me first, an' then father licked me for letting Jimmy lick me, and then Jimmy licked me again for telling father, an' now I suppose I shall catch it again from father!"

A PROFESSOR in a German medical college had one exasperating student. "You see, Herr Dumm," said the professor to this young man, one day, "the subject of this diagram limps, because one of his legs is a trifle shorter than the other. Now, what should you do in such a case?" "I should limp, too, I think, Herr Professor," replied the student, with an expression of perfect innocence on his stupid face.

A MAN who had been convicted of stealing a small amount was brought into court for sentence. He looked very sad and hopeless, and the court was very much moved by his contrite appearance. "Have you ever been sentenced to imprisonment?" the judge asked. "Never, never!" exclaimed the prisoner, bursting into tears. "Don't cry, don't cry," said the judge, consolingly, "you're going to be, now."

OUT OF HIS WAY.—Mrs. Gotham: "You are going down town, are you not?" Mr. Gotham: "Yes, my dear." Mrs. G.: "Well, I wish you'd drop into Silke, Ribbon and Co.'s on your way and match th—." Mr. G. (hurriedly): "I've got to see Jones, and that will take me some distance from Silke, Ribbon and Co.'s." Mrs. G.: "Well, Mr. Jones's office is only a short distance from the Imported Finery Bazaar, and that will do just as well. Take this and ask—" Mr. G. (hastily): "After leaving Jones I must see Smith, who is in an opposite direction from the bazaar, you know." Mrs. G.: "No matter. Cheape, Bargain and Co. will do. They are near Smith's." Mr. G.: "But I've got to take a roundabout way to Smith's in order to see Brown. Can't pass Cheape, Bargain and Co.'s, my dear." Mrs. G. (impatiently): "Humph! Where are you going after you leave Smith's?" Mr. G. (helplessly): "I'm going up in a balloon."

THIS life is what we make it part of the time; the rest of the time it is what some woman makes it.

"JOHNNY, where did you hear that bad word?" "Why, papa, didn't you know that mamma played ping-pong?"

AN ADOBIT PRETENDER.—She: "It's very strange, if she is of such noble descent, that nobody knows who her great-great-grandfather was." He: "She explains that by claiming descent from the Man with the Iron Mask."

At a young ladies' seminary, during an examination in history, one of the pupils was interrogated thus: "Mary, did Martin Luther die a natural death?" "No," was the reply, "he was excommunicated by a bull."

In the Pullman car: The Tourist: "Yes, nice grass that. But over in England there are lawns that are over two hundred years old. What do you think of that?" The Trider: "Think? I think it's a case of green old age."

"THE word 'No' will blight my life; 'Yes' will make me walk with my head in the skies," said Pillsbury to his best girl. "It would be too bad to blight your life, so I won't say 'No,'" she said. "And you will say—" "I'll say 'Nay.'"

WHY do people wait until a man is sick and can't eat to send him good things? When he is well and would like something good no neighbour comes in with fancy jellies, old wines, and things like that. Things are very unfair.

SHE (poetically): "With this golden bright sky, the sighing of the balmy zephyrs, and the far vista across the foamy waves, one can't but dream they are in sweetest Italy." He: "Good idea. Suppose we have macaroni for dinner."

PRETTY COUSIN: "Your friend, Dr. Lancet, passed me down town to-day without even a bow." He: "Oh well, you know, he's awfully absent-minded. He's so completely devoted to his surgical practice." "But that's no reason why he should cut me."

CAPTAIN CRUISER: "So your son is a little dissipated, eh?" Anxious Mother: "Oh, very, captain, very. What can I do with him?" "Leave him to me. We sail from New York to San Francisco next week, and won't touch port for seven months." "But, captain, don't you think brandy or any other spirit is just as bad as port for my son?"

"LET us dine together," said a native King to a missionary. "With great pleasure," replied the good man; "but I must be host." "I have planned it differently," remarked the King, with an appreciative glance at the missionary's ample proportions. "You shall be the dinner."

A CANDID CRITIC.—"Well, what do you think of my picture at the academy of design?" asked young Mählstick of Jones the other day. "Fair, dear boy, fair; but now you ask me I must confess I liked your earlier style better." "Earlier style?" "Yes; when you didn't paint at all, you know."

GREAT PRESENCE OF MIND.—Charley DeLanguid: "Aw, waitaw, bwing me a bwan dy cocktail, quick! Someone just fell ova into the wataw, and it gave me such a shock, don't you know, that I must have something to soothe my nerves at once. And then, waitaw, when you have brought me the cocktail, you might go and throw the poor fellow a wope, don't you know."

"WELL, Mr. Pedagogue, does my boy show any special aptitude for work?" asked the proud father. "I think so, Mr. Bronson," returned the schoolmaster. "I am uncertain as yet whether John will make a sculptor or a baseball player. He is unerring in his aim with paper wads, but the condition of his desk top convinces me that he can carve with considerable facility."

ARTHUR: "I would marry that girl but for one thing." Chester: "Afraid to pop the question?" Arthur: "No. Afraid to question the pop."

UPGRADESON: "Among the fraternity of professional musicians I consider—" Atom: "Fraternity of professional musicians! Don't talk nonsense, old man!"

HE: "Miss Wadsworth is rather mannish, isn't she?" She: "Exceedingly! Why, she'd rather pay two cents more for an article than go into a department store to buy it."

GREAT CAUSE FOR GRATITUDE.—"Madam, I have come to thank you," murmured a tramp to a Binghampton woman. "What have I done for you?" asked the woman, surprised.

VISITOR: "What are you crying about, my little man?" Little Willie: "All my brothers have holidays, and I have none." Visitor: "Why, that's too bad. How is it?" Willie (between sobs): "I don't go to school yet."

A PUZZLE to the city of Galveston is how Mr. Grempeznaki escaped from an asylum to which he had been sent as a lunatic. Perhaps he unbraided his name and let himself down from a window with it.

GREENE: "They tell me you send a good many things to the magazines, as well as to the daily papers. Come now, is there any money in literature?" Browner: "If there isn't it is no fault of mine. I never took any out of it."

FIRST BON VIVANT: "Do you know, Nervely, that glass bottles injure the quality of wine?" Second Bon Vivant (seizing a bottle and an empty glass): "Good Heavens! Mr. Knob, is that so? Then we won't let this wine stay in the bottle another minute."

MISS SKREEN: "Where did you graduate from, Mr. Gill?" Mr. Gill: "From the school of pharmacy." Miss Skreen (with surprise): "Is it possible? What a strange choice for a young man brought up in the city! But if I remember rightly, your grandfather was a farmer, too."

MAIDEN LADY: "I think I will visit a chiropodist while I am in the city." Friend: "Have you come?" Lady: "No." Friend: "Bunions?" Lady: "No." Friend: "Why, then, visit a chiropodist?" Lady: "I want to have it to say that I had a man at my feet once in my life."

BOARDING-HOUSE MISTRESS: "Well, if you'll agree to make yourself handy, and do all the windows around the house, I'll pay you one pound a week." O'Rourke: "One pound a wake? Very well, mum. An' as we now do be strangers, I suppose yez will folly the reg'lar boardin'-house rules, and pay in advance?"

MR. SCHWIRMER (to the young widow of old Otard): "And so you really say, Mrs. Otard, that a girl of twenty can actually be sincere when she says she truly loves a man of fifty?" Mrs. Otard (indignantly): "Sincere? Of course I do!" Mr. Schwirmer: "Oh, thank you! Then maybe there will be some chance for me twenty years hence, after all!"

"You refused to give me one of those dumpings you had for dinner yesterday." "Yes, I remember," she replied, impatiently. "And you gave one to an old man who cleaned up your doorway." "True again. He was as industrious as you were lazy, and deserved it." "Madam," continued the tramp, solemnly, "I owe you my life. It killed him."

CITIZEN (to tramp): "Well, you look to me, my friend, as if the freedom of a brewery would be somewhat conducive to your general happiness." Tramp: "Yes, I wouldn't mind spending some spare time in such a place if it were well ventilated, and I wasn't interfered with; but, if the matter were left entirely to my own choice, I think I would prefer a distillery."

Society.

THE Prince of Wales is dividing his time between deerstalking and salmon fishing on Deeside. One day his Royal Highness bagged a Royal, weighing 15st., and having a magnificent head, which is being set up. The Prince and Princess, accompanied by their sons, have been several times at the river side, and the Prince has had very good sport with both salmon and grilse. The water has been in grand condition, and the pools are well stocked with summer fish.

QUEEN WILHELMINA of the Netherlands celebrated her twenty-second birthday on August 31st.

LORD METHUEN's tenants have presented his lordship with a portrait of his eldest daughter, together with an illuminated address. The presentation took place on the General's birthday, at Corsham Court. Lord Methuen expressed the pleasure it gave him to receive so substantial a token of the goodwill of his tenants.

KING LEWANIKI, the ruler of the Barotsi people, in Equatorial Africa, one of the most notable of the Coronation visitors, has departed. He took with him a large quantity of personal baggage, comprising forty silk hats and other articles of costume, chiefly intended for use by his head-men on occasions of ceremony. He is much impressed and delighted with his visit to England and the welcome that was everywhere accorded to him.

THE SHAH, during his stay in London, ordered half a dozen motor-cars from a London agency. The cars are roofed, and by means of removable glass partitions can be converted into closed carriages. Each car can seat six or eight occupants. Two of the cars are going out to Persia immediately. The other four will be sent out later. Two engineers are going out to Persia with the cars. These cars are the only ones which the Shah has purchased during his European visit.

LADY CURZON, the wife of the Viceroy of India, has received a letter from the Queen, in which her Majesty says: "The Indian Coronation robes you so kindly designed are perfect, and make the most brilliant effect. I am so proud at wearing an Indian dress on this great occasion. I hope you will make this known in India." This letter refers to the Indian robe worn by Queen Alexandra at the Coronation ceremony in Westminster Abbey.

THERE are two ladies still on the Pension List dating from the time of George IV. One is Lady Barrow, the adopted daughter of John William Croker, Lord Macaulay's "bad, very bad man, I fear." The other is the mother of Sir William Anson, M.P. for Oxford University and Warden of All Souls.

A WRITER in the "Queen" on the subject of "Laundries and Legislation" tells the following "new and true" anecdote as illustrating some of the conditions under which lady factory inspectors labour: "After more palaver than would be needed even for the transference from hand to hand of an Eastern carpet, one of the chief of our lady inspectors succeeded in inducing the ancient dame who owned the laundry to show her over the premises. The landlady threw open the door of the steaming kitchen with a dramatic gesture, disclosing half-a-dozen washerwomen at work, and said, 'Ladies! a woman from the Government to see you!'

PRINCE NAPOLEON, who is now the head of the house of Bonaparte, is staying with the Empress Eugénie at Farnborough. The Prince is the brother of Prince Louis Napoleon, who is a general in the Russian service. He is a great admirer of England, and, if weather and circumstances permit, is not unlikely to visit one of our great centres of industry, in which he takes keen interest. He is accompanied by Prince De Lucinge, a grandson of Duc d'Orléans.

Helpful Talks

BY THE EDITOR.

The Editor is pleased to hear from his readers at any time.

All letters must give the name and address of the writers, not for publication, but as a guarantee of good faith.

MOULDY.—The Romans used lemons to keep moth from their woollen clothes.

THISTLE.—A debtor can only be committed to prison for contempt of Court when he willfully refuses to obey an order made by the judge.

SMILING MAY.—It is said that the best cure for a cold is total abstinence from liquid food of any kind for a day or two—called the dry system.

IRISH BEAUTY.—A patchwork quilt made some years ago by a blind woman of Philadelphia was composed of 55,555 pieces of material.

INQUIRER.—The juice of an onion was used in olden times for the removal of freckles. Ivy leaves boiled in wine was another favourite remedy.

VIOLET.—The breath may be sweetened by chewing a clove or a tiny piece of onion-root every night and morning. A piece of burnt alum about the size of a small bean has also a good effect.

MARIANNE.—The personal property of a deceased wife, dying without a will, goes to the husband. Real property goes to the

husband for life, and afterwards to the children.

BLOTCHY FACE.—Pure cold water should be drunk frequently every day to keep the system pure, while the number of ways in which hot water can be used as an alleviator of pain is legion.

MISS A.—The first silk stockings in England were knitted by a Mrs. Montague, and given to Queen Elizabeth, who was so pleased with them that she never wore anything else afterwards but silk hose.

FASHION PLATE.—The forerunner of the fashion plate was a dressed doll, which was sent from one country to another—an expensive affair, which soon gave place in Paris to the first fashion paper.

EVERGREEN.—It is claimed that a sure cure for hiccoughs is to inhale as much air as the lungs will hold and retain it as long as possible. If one inhalation is not sufficient, repeat the process.

CAPUT.—Apparently you are suffering from some disease of the scalp, and I am quite unable to prescribe for you. I am sorry that I cannot comply with your request, but I only give recipes, in this connection, for simple toilet preparations. You would be wise to consult a skin or hair specialist.

JUNIOR.—(1) A gentleman would walk on the outside, whether it was on the right or left side of the lady, and offer his arm accordingly. (2) The right arm should be offered to the lady in this instance. (3) The lady sits at the right of her escort at table. (4) The hostess usually arranges this by taking her own seat first, and as she enters the dining-room last of the ladies, there is usually only the one chair left for her escort, which may or may not be on her left hand, according to the arrangement of the guests.

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JUNO.—Excellent scented bags to place among the linen may be made thus: Take rose-leaves dried in the shade, cloves beaten to a powder, and scraped mace; mix these together and fill the bags with the mixture.

WOMEN-GONE MRG.—To take away freckles, take four spoonfuls of May dew, and one spoonful of the oil of tartar, mingle them together, and wash the places where freckles be, and let it dry of itself; it will clear the skin and take away all foul spots.

EASTERN STAR.—Your old wicker or cane-seated chairs can be given a new lease of life and be made to look like new by staining them with the new prepared stains which stain and varnish at one application. These stains can be made effective even over old paint by applying two coats. Then make some cushions for seat and back and your chairs are new again.

DOUBT.—Secret letters that cannot be read without the recipient being in the secret can be written with an ink made as follows:—Take fine alum, beat it very small, and put a reasonable quantity of it into water, then write with the said water. The words cannot be read but by steeping your paper in clear running water. You may likewise write with vinegar, or the juice of a lemon or onion; if you would read the same you must hold it before the fire.

HOME-WORKER.—A cheap and effective substitute for putty to stop cracks in woodwork is made by soaking newspapers in a paste made by boiling a pound of flour in three quarts of water and adding a teaspoonful of alum. The mixture should be of about the same consistency as putty, and should be forced into the cracks with a blunt knife. It will harden like paper-mache, and when dry may be painted or stained to match the boards, when it will be almost imperceptible.

NEENA ANN.—To cure your headache, take red rose leaves dried, mix them with wheat flower, vinegar, oil of roses, and some house-leek, boil them till they thicken, spread it on a linen cloth, and lay it to the forehead and temples, and it will ease the pain.

LOVER OF CATS.—To keep your cat in good condition it is necessary to bear in mind two great facts—that it needs proper regular food and drink and good housing. A cat requires at least two good meals a day; kittens require to be fed oftener. Have a special dish or saucer for the cat, and see that the platter is kept clean and not left lying about after the animal has had sufficient food. Let the food given be varied—for breakfast let it be oatmeal porridge, slightly sweetened, and milk, or white bread steeped in warm milk, also slightly sweetened; for the second meal there must be flesh. Of course, occasionally let it have fish. As regards drink, it should have a dish of clean, fresh water kept in one place, so that it can drink at any time, also a saucer of fresh milk once or twice a day. Some cats prefer to have their milk diluted with a little warm water. The housing question is the next consideration. Never turn your cat out all night. Let it have a run before going to bed, but let it sleep indoors in its own basket. To ensure pussy coming home at night make its chief meal supper, and it will always arrive for that.

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THE
LONDON READER

of Literature, Science, Art, and General Information.

PART 503. VOL LXXX—DECEMBER, 1902

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PRICE SIXPENCE

LONDON

PUBLISHED AT THE OFFICE, 50-52, LUDGATE HILL, E.C.

AND OF ALL BOOKSELLERS AND NEWSAGENTS.